MARVEL

THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN®

THE FINAL CURTAIN

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MARVEL COMICS

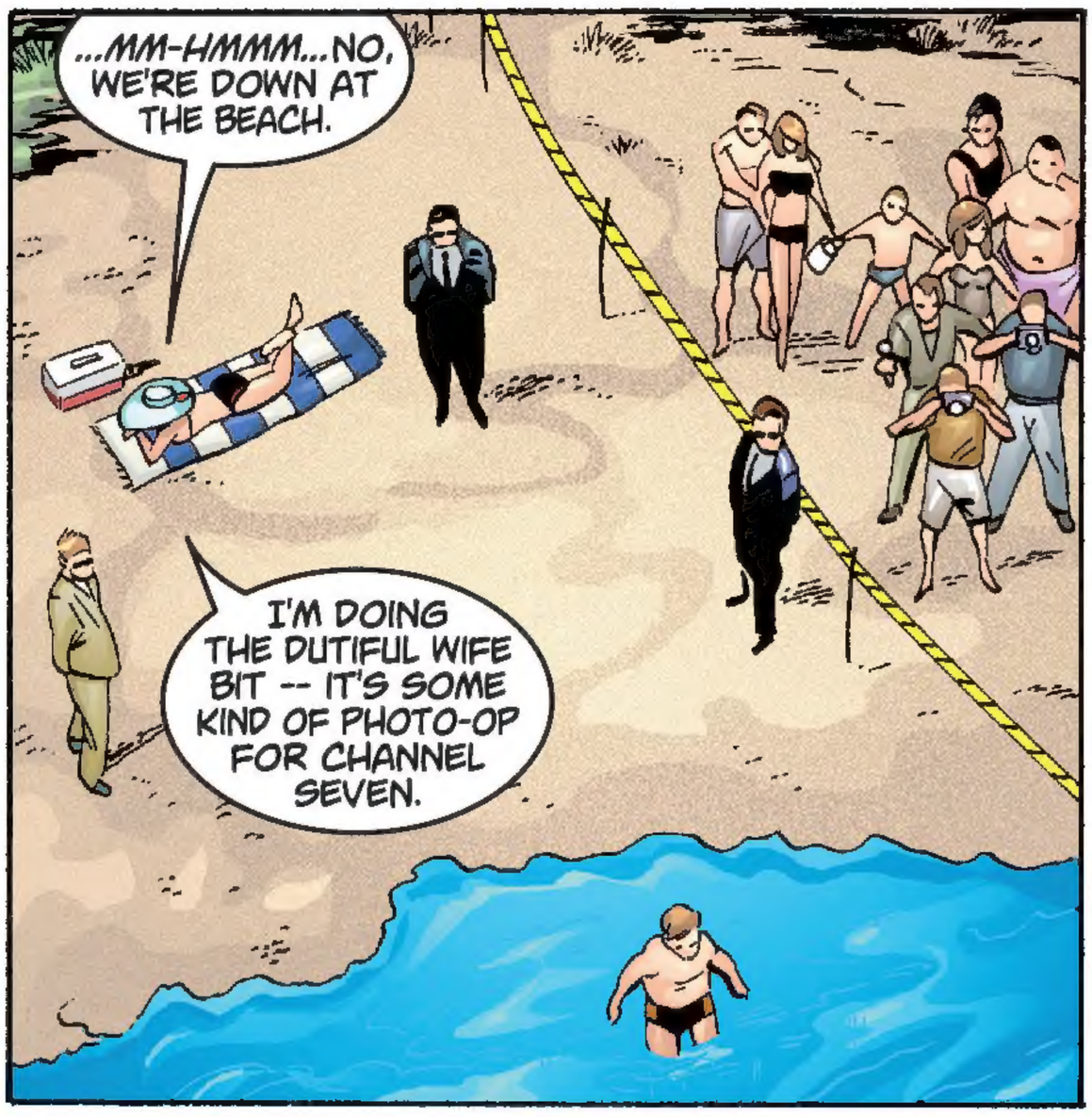
PETER PARKER™ SPIDER-MAN®

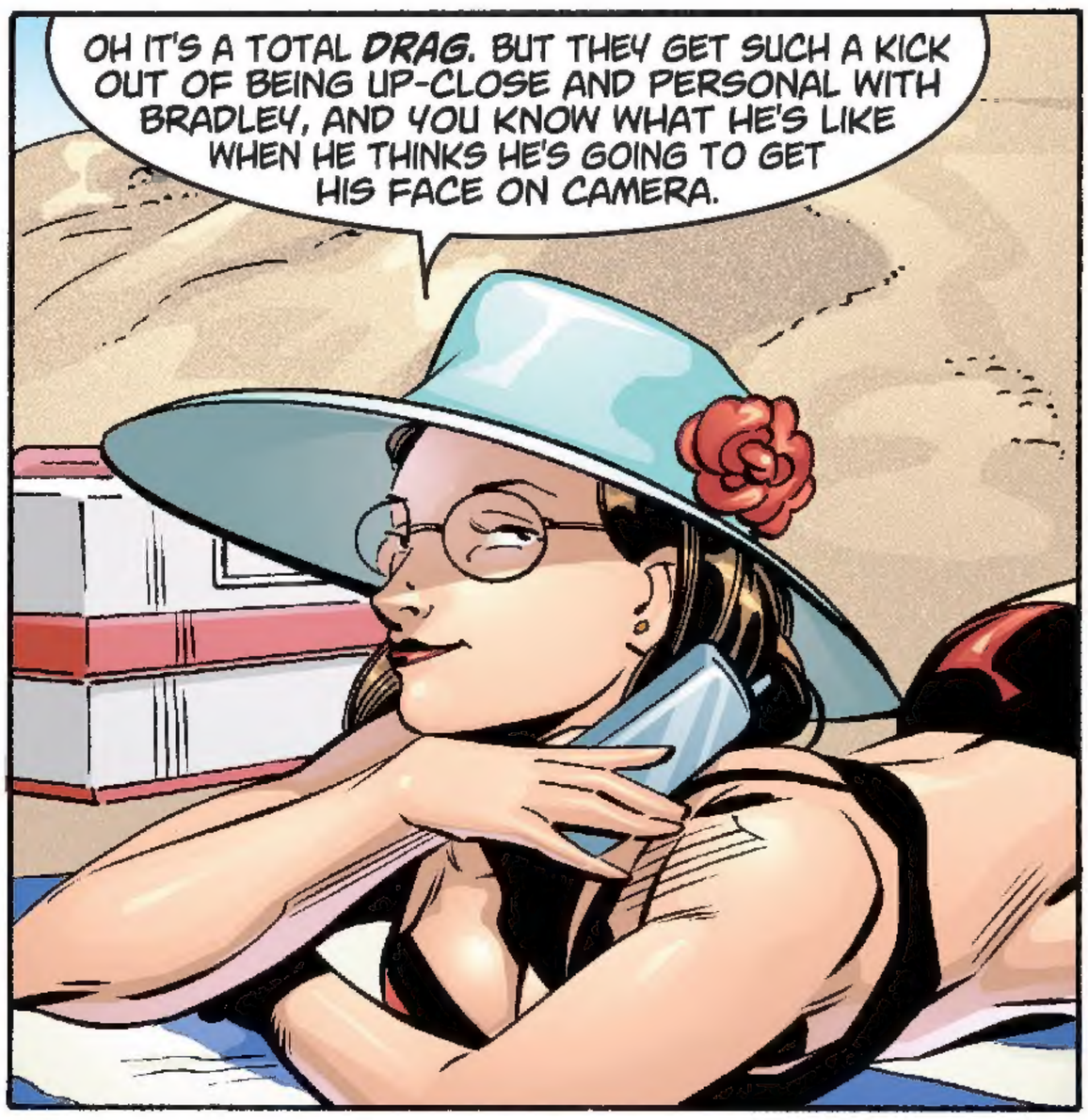
MARVEL PG 39 137

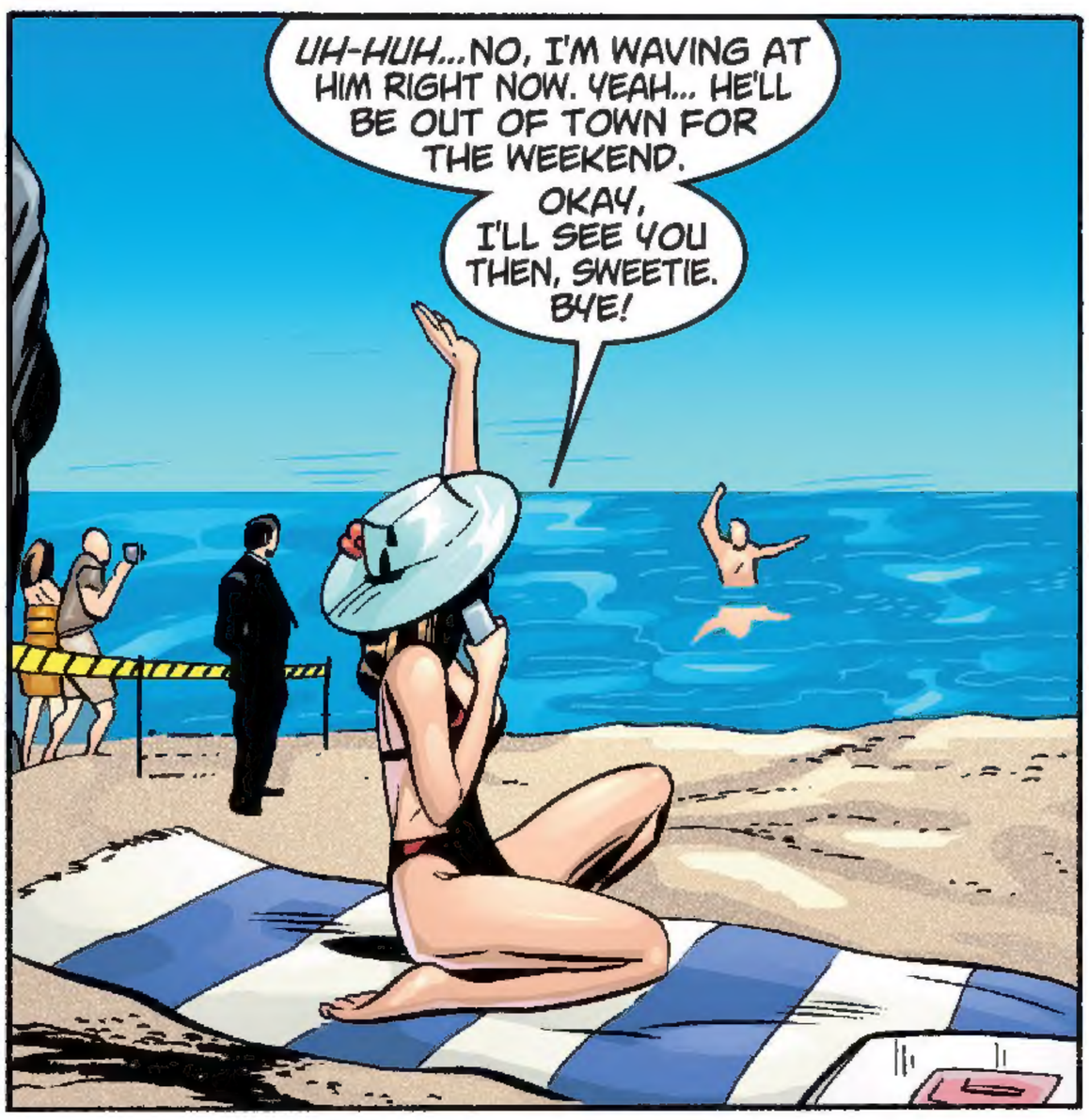
RAMOS/ FAUCHER delgado

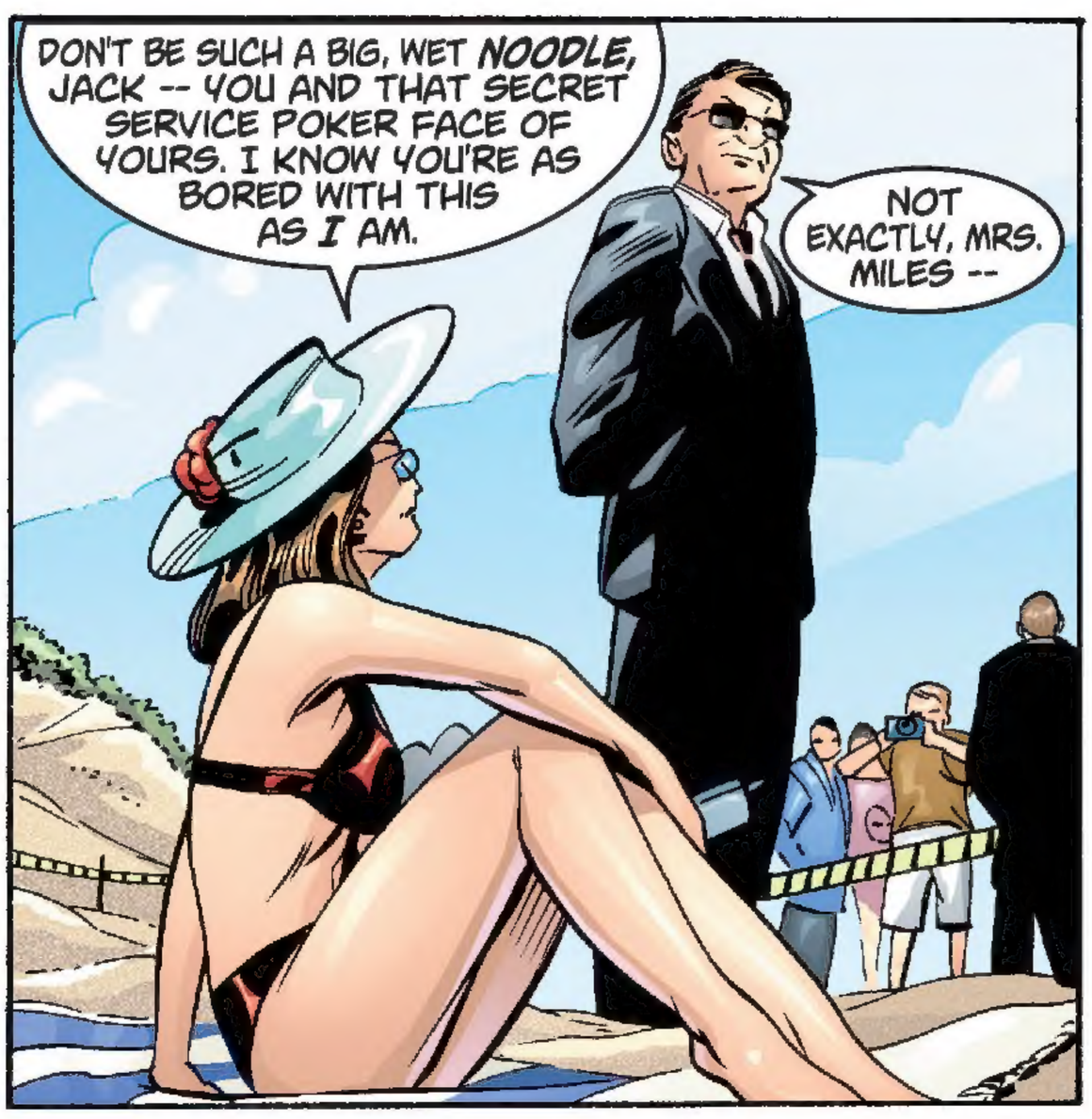
JENKINS
BUCKINGHAM
FAUCHER

At a demonstration on Radiation, high school student PETER PARKER was bitten by an Irradiated Spider from which he gained the Arachnid's Incredible Abilities. When a burglar killed his beloved Uncle Ben, a grief-stricken Peter vowed to use his Great Powers in the service of his fellow man, because he learned an invaluable lesson: With Great Power must also come Great Responsibility. STAN LEE PRESENTS: PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN!




OH IT'S A TOTAL DRAG. BUT THEY GET SUCH A KICK OUT OF BEING UP-CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH BRADLEY, AND YOU KNOW WHAT HE'S LIKE WHEN HE THINKS HE'S GOING TO GET HIS FACE ON CAMERA.




DON'T BE SUCH A BIG, WET NOODLE, JACK -- YOU AND THAT SECRET SERVICE POKER FACE OF YOURS. I KNOW YOU'RE AS BORED WITH THIS AS I AM.
NOT EXACTLY, MRS. MILES --

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OVER THERE! GET IN THE WATER -- *NOW!*

AUGHH! OH, PLEASE... =HH-AHH= ...IT'S GOT MY *ARM!*

AIM *HIGHER!* DON'T HIT THE CONGRESSMAN --

I'M TRYIN' *NOT* TO, SIR! I CAN'T SEE THROUGH THE *SURF!*

YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE ASSURED OF HIS *SAFETY,* TOMMY -- DIDN'T WE CHECK THIS AREA WITH THE COAST GUARD?

I *DID* CHECK, SIR! THEY SAID THERE WAS NO SHARK ACTIVITY AT THIS TIME OF DAY --

THERE! GRAB HIS ARM --

=GH-HUHH!=

ON SECOND THOUGHT, BETTER TAKE A *LEG.*

AND TELL JOHNSON TO CALL THROUGH TO COUNTY FOR A MEDIC.

OVER THERE -- IT'S GOIN' BACK OUT TO *SEA!*

AGENT WILLIFORD! GET MRS. MILES BACK INTO THE LIMO, *PRONTO* --

BLAM BLAM!!

IT WENT BACK UNDER WATER. HECK...DID YOU SEE THE *SIZE* OF THAT THING, SIR? BIGGEST SHARK I EVER SAW --

BLAM BLAM

THAT WAS NO SHARK.

STAN LEE PRESENTS:

OPERATION: OCTOPUS

SCIENCE &TECHNOLOGY CONVENTION
FUTURE GEEKS
SCIENCE CO
SCHOOL BUS
RIGHT THEN, EVERYBODY...THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF MYOELECTRIC TECHNOLOGY.
CAN ANYONE GIVE ME A DEFINITION FOR "MYOELECTRIC".
OKAY...*MYOELECTRIC* IS A TERM APPLIED TO MACHINES CONTROLLED BY THE CONTRACTION OF A MUSCLE.
LET'S SAY YOU WANTED TO MANAGE A PROSTHETIC LIMB WITH YOUR REMAINING MUSCLES AFTER AN AMPUTATION, FOR INSTANCE...
...OKAY, SO... YOUR BRAIN SENDS A SIGNAL TO THE MUSCLES, AND YOUR MUSCLES CONTRACT. THIS, IN TURN, MAKES THE ARTIFICIAL HAND GRIP.
10
ON A MORE ADVANCED LEVEL, THIS COULD BE APPLIED IN THE FIELD OF, SAY, BIONICS.
YOU GUYS ARE ALL TOO YOUNG TO REMEMBER THE SIX-MILLION-DOLLAR MAN, RIGHT? THE ***BIONIC*** MAN? ANYONE?
...OKAY, KIDS... SEE? I MOVE MY FINGERS TO SCROLL THROUGH THE TANK'S ARMORY. LEFT CLICK FOR DEFENSE SHIELDS...
POINTS
150000
WATCH OUT FOR THE ZOMBIE!
IS IT ME, DAPHNE, OR DO THEY HAVE THE ATTENTION SPAN OF A COMATOSE ***NEWT?***
I THINK YOU'RE BEING ***UNFAIR,*** PETER. A NEWT WOULDN'T BE LIKELY TO MISTAKE *TWISTED METAL: BLACK* FOR A ***DOCUMENTARY.***

SOMETIMES, I WONDER IF I'M EVER GOING TO REMEMBER WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO BE A TEENAGER. I MEAN, IT WASN'T *THAT* LONG AGO, WAS IT?

MAYBE I'M DRIVING MY SCHOOL BUS IN THE WRONG DIRECTION, OR SOMETHING. IT'S JUST WHEN I WAS THEIR AGE, I WOULD'VE LINED UP FOR HOURS TO GET INSIDE THIS PLACE.

BIO TECHNIX

SPECIAL PRESENTATION TODAY WITH CONGRESSMAN **BRADLEY MILES**

CYBERNETICS

MIND YOU, IF I REMEMBER MY TEENAGE YEARS CORRECTLY, THE CONVENTION CENTER PROBABLY WOULD'VE *TELEPORTED* BY NOW --

BIO BUGS

PLEASE TAKE ONE

THERE'S SOMETHING *WRONG.*

I CAN SENSE IT IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY: NERVES ARE JUMPING LIKE A CAT IN A CAR ENGINE.

IT'S THIS *EXHIBIT.*

BIO TECHNIX

...THANKS TO THE LATEST ADVANCES IN THE APPLICATION OF OUR SOLID-STATE, MINIATURIZED CIRCUITRY, WE HERE AT BIOTECHNIX FEEL CONFIDENT THAT OUR NEWEST PROTOTYPE LIMBS WILL PAVE THE WAY FOR PROSTHETICS IN THE 21ST CENTURY AND BEYOND.

AND NOW, PLEASE GIVE A WARM WELCOME FOR NEW YORK'S MOST FAMOUS AMPUTEE -- CONGRESSMAN BRADLEY MILES!

HI, EVERYONE. THANKS FOR COMING.

FIRST OF ALL, I WANT TO LET YOU KNOW THAT MY FAMILY AND I ARE DOING WELL. THAT WAS A PRETTY HAIRY EXPERIENCE I HAD LAST MONTH, BUT DON'T WORRY: I'VE GOTTEN *USED* TO SHAKING HANDS WITH SHARKS FROM MY TIME ON CAPITOL HILL.

BIO TECHNIX

HA HA HA HA

YOU KNOW, JUST A FEW YEARS AGO I WOULD'VE RESIGNED MYSELF TO BEING THE *"ONE-ARMED CONGRESSMAN FROM NEW YORK."* I WOULD'VE HAD TO GIVE UP MY DREAM OF BEING ON THE PGA TOUR AND SPENT MY REMAINING YEARS AN OBJECT OF CURIOSITY.

WELL, I'M *STILL* GOING TO BE A CURIOSITY. BUT THANKS TO MY PIONEERING FRIENDS HERE AT BIOTECHNIX, I'M GOING TO DO IT WITH THE AID OF THE T-137 PROTOTYPE ARM!

OKAY...THIS IS A CROCK: I'M *SURE* OF IT NOW. THERE'S SOMETHING WEIRD ABOUT THAT ARTIFICIAL HAND.

THE T-137 IS THE RESULT OF TEN HARD YEARS OF RESEARCH AND DETERMINATION. THE TECHNOLOGY'S IN THE EARLY STAGES YET, BUT IF I HAVE MY WAY IN CONGRESS, THAT'S GOING TO CHANGE.

JUST IMAGINE: WHAT WAS ONCE A DREAM BECOMES COMMONPLACE. I CAN MOVE MY NEW HAND JUST BY *WILLING* IT.

IT'S PRETTY BULKY IN THIS FORM, BUT THAT'S WHY WE'RE PUSHING FOR FUNDING -- SO THAT BIOTECHNIX CAN WORK ON MINIATURIZING THE COMPONENTS AND BRINGING THEM INSIDE AN ORDINARY PROSTHETIC ARM.

YOU KNOW...JUST SO I DON'T HAVE TO SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE LOOKING LIKE A PINCER CRAB --

HA HA HA HA

CAN'T SHAKE THE *FEELING:* IT'S ONE OF THOSE WEIRD INTUITIONS I GET WHENEVER MY SPIDER-SENSE IS TRYING TO TELL ME SOMETHING.

IT'S COMING FROM SOMEONE AROUND ME: SOMEONE WHO ISN'T SUPPOSED TO *BE* HERE.

BIO TECHNIX

...I'M SORRY, CAN YOU SPEAK UP A LITTLE BIT?

NO...IT'S JUST *NOISY* HERE. WE'RE SETTING UP THE PRESSES FOR THE CLARION COLOR SUPPLEMENT --

IT'S NOTHING MAJOR, ROBBIE -- I WAS *CURIOUS* ABOUT THESE GUYS, IS ALL. I READ THAT PIECE YOU RAN ABOUT THEM IN THE BUGLE LAST MONTH.

IT SEEMS WEIRD THAT MILES MAKES NO ATTEMPT TO HIDE HIS ASSOCIATION WITH BIOTECHNIX. I FELT LIKE I WAS WATCHING AN *INFOMERCIAL.*

YOU KNOW HOW IT IS, PETER: DRUG COMPANIES HAVE BEEN HUSTLING THROUGH LEGISLATION ON MEDICAL RESEARCH FOR YEARS. WE HAD A LEAD ON THAT STORY A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO, BUT IT NEVER PANNED OUT.

AS FAR AS I COULD ESTABLISH, THERE WERE SOME MAJOR PAYOFFS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS -- BUT JONAH'S NOT INTERESTED. HE SAYS CONGRESSIONAL INDISCRETIONS ARE OLD NEWS.

IN OTHER WORDS, HE'S TAKEN THE BUDGET AWAY FOR THE INVESTIGATION?

I FEEL YOUR *PAIN,* ROBBIE.

MY PAIN? WHAT, YOU MEAN THE ONE WITH THE HITLER MUSTACHE AND THE PERSONALITY OF A WOUNDED BADGER? I'M BEGINNING TO THINK HE WOULDN'T KNOW A DECENT STORY IF IT CAME RUNNING AROUND A CORNER AND BIT HIM ON THE REAR END.

YEAH. AN' IF IT DID, JONAH WOULD BE TEMPTED TO WRITE THE STORY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HIS REAR END --

I HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR CHOMPY-CHOMPS, OLGA.

NOW, LET'S SEE: WHERE WAS I? AH, YES...

WH-WHO IS IT? IS THAT *YOU*?

YES, OCTAVIUS.

IT'S *TIME*.

HEY, I THOUGHT YOU WERE *BLIND* OR SOMETHING. DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE BEEN *FAKING* IT ALL THESE YEARS, MATT --

VERY FUNNY. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I'M NOT HOLDING IT UP TO THE LIGHT --

-- I'M FEELING THE PACKING MATERIAL.

WHATEVER FLOATS YOUR BOAT, MAN. SO, WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME? D'YOU KNOW WHERE IT CAME FROM?

PATIENCE, YOUNG GRASSHOPPER.

HMM, OKAY...THE PACKAGING IS FAIRLY STANDARD...SIX-PRONGED COMPUTER CHIP MICROPROCESSOR...

...MILD STATIC CHARGE...

=SNFF=

...FAINT SMELL OF POTASSIUM BROMIDE.

BIOTECHNIX HAS A BUILDING JUST BELOW GRAND STREET IN CHINATOWN, RIGHT? I SEEM TO RECALL THAT'S RIGHT NEXT TO A CHEMICAL STORAGE FACILITY.

AT A GUESS, I'D SAY YOU START CAUSING TROUBLE AND ANNOYING PEOPLE DOWN THERE.

BROMIDE, HUH? YOU AMAZE ME.

I KNOW.

I NEED THAT LIMB -- WHY HAVEN'T YOU *FINISHED* IT YET?

I-I'M SORRY, FUSION. I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO CALIBRATE THE NERVE ENDING ATTACHMENTS, WORKING WITH SUCH SMALL TRANSISTORS --

PLEASE... THESE ARE MINUTE ADJUSTMENTS MADE AT AN ATOMIC LEVEL. YOU MUST ALLOW ME MORE TIME --

I GIVE YOU ONE SIMPLE TASK, FOR WHICH THE TIMING IS CRUCIAL, AND I FIND YOU BUSY FEEDING YOUR PET OCTOPUS INSTEAD.

AND YOU HAVE THE GALL TO ASK ME FOR MORE TIME?

YOU CAN'T TALK TO ME LIKE THAT...

...YOU *CAN'T*...

THE ARM WILL BE READY BY TOMORROW MORNING.

NO MORE DISTRACTIONS, YOU RIDICULOUS CLOWN. DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME?

YES.

ATTACK.

N-NO! NOT OLGA...*PLEASE!* SHE CAN'T BE IN HER TANK WHEN IT'S FULL OF HER OWN INK. IT'LL *KILL* HER --

NN-AAH!

WHEN I DISCOVERED YOU WORKING UNDER AN ASSUMED NAME AT ONE OF MY OWN FACILITIES, OCTAVIUS, I PERMITTED YOU TO REMAIN UNDETECTED BY THE AUTHORITIES FOR ONE REASON ONLY.

I ALLOW YOU TO REMAIN *ALIVE* BECAUSE YOU'RE USEFUL TO ME. I *MAY* EVEN ALLOW YOU TO LIVE WHEN I'M FINISHED WITH YOU.

BUT DON'T YOU *DARE* -- DON'T YOU *EVER* DARE -- TO DEFY ME AGAIN, DO YOU HEAR ME?

PLEASE...

...PLEASE, *STOP*...

I WILL...

...THE MOMENT I'M CERTAIN SPIDER-MAN IS *DEAD.*

...LOOK, I DON'T CARE IF YOU THINK IT'S NEWS.

'NIGHT, HARRY!

IT ISN'T NEWS -- IT MAKES ME LOOK BAD.

DON'T GIVE ME THAT LINE, YOU LITTLE BACTERIA. I SWEAR, JOHN, IF I HAVE TO COME UP THERE AND PERSONALLY KICK YOUR FAT BEHIND DOWN A FLIGHT OF STAIRS, I ***WILL***.

I DON'T ***CARE*** IF THEY'RE FROM CNN -- THEY ASK ***MY*** QUESTIONS, OR THEY DON'T ASK ***ANY*** QUESTIONS.

WELL, YOU MAKE ***SURE*** THEY UNDERSTAND. AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, TELL THEM NEXT TIME TO LIGHT ME FROM A HALFWAY DECENT ANGLE, UNDERSTOOD?

GOOD --

THWIP

HI. I HAVE A COLLECT CALL FOR THE CORRUPT CONGRESSMAN ON LINE SEVEN.

OH. GOD... HARRY!

SORRY, BRAD -- HARRY'S NOT INVITED.

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?

WELL, LET'S ***SEE*** NOW: HOW ABOUT WE START WITH THAT EXPENSIVE ARM OF YOURS.

OR THE FACT YOU WERE IN THE SAME FRATERNITY AS THAT BILLIONAIRE GUY, AMOS PETERS -- THE SAME GUY WHO JUST HAPPENS TO BE A CO-OWNER OF BIOTECHNIX.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, SPIDER-MAN? YOU'RE ACCUSING AN ELECTED MEMBER OF CONGRESS --

HEY, WHAT CAN I SAY? I VOTED FOR THE OTHER GUY.

AND BEING THE CONCERNED CITIZEN I AM, I CHECKED OUT THE BILL YOU ROUTED THROUGH CONGRESS THAT ESSENTIALLY GRANTED YOU PRIVILEGED STATUS FOR THE RECEIPT OF A T-137 PROSTHETIC LIMB. IT WAS ALL THE RAGE ON C-SPAN AT FOUR IN THE MORNING.

PRETTY CLEVER TRICK BY THE WAY: I LIKE HOW YOU TACKED IT ON THE TAIL END OF A THIRTY-SEVEN PERCENT CONGRESSIONAL PAY RAISE SO EVERYONE WOULD BE TOO BUSY COMPLAINING TO NOTICE.

WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

MY POINT IS, YOU SMELL LIKE ***RAT,*** CONGRESSMAN. AND WHEN I FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT ***FLAVOR*** OF RAT YOU ARE, I'M GOING TO SEND YOU TO THE PAPERS SO THEY CAN HAVE A BOWL OF RAT SOUP.

WHY SHOULD ANYONE BELIEVE THE WORD OF A VIGILANTE IN RED SPANDEX?

BECAUSE I'M NOT A POLITICIAN.

DO I LOOK *FAT* IN THIS?

YEAH. YOU LOOK LIKE A WALRUS DISGUISED AS A MONKEY.

HEY, IF I WANTED A COMEDIAN FOR MY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, I WOULDA HIRED DREW CAREY --

SURE. ONLY IF YOU POINTED A GUN AT HIS HEAD.

LISTEN, JONAH, ABOUT THAT BIOTECHNIX STORY...

...I GOT A TIP FROM AN ANONYMOUS CALLER THE OTHER DAY ABOUT CERTAIN IMPROPRIETIES IN THEIR TESTING AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES --

SAY THAT AGAIN IN ENGLISH.

COCKTAILS

OKAY... ACCORDING TO MY SOURCE, ALL RECIPIENTS OF THE T-137 PROTOTYPE LIMBS ARE FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES OF A CERTAIN BRADLEY MILES.

I DID SOME CHECKING AROUND, MADE A COUPLE OF CALLS. NEXT THING YOU KNOW, MILES IS CALLING IN FAVORS FROM VARIOUS FRIENDS IN THE MEDIA, TRYING TO SQUASH THE STORY.

SO SOME POLITICIAN DOES A BACK-END DEAL TO GET HIMSELF A FANCY NEW ARM -- SO WHAT? LAST I HEARD, THAT KIND OF HOOEY WAS A DAILY OCCURRENCE, ROBBIE.

OKAY, TRY THIS ON FOR SIZE: IT TURNS OUT BIOTECHNIX HAS PURPOSELY REMOVED THE NAMES OF SOME OF THE RECIPIENTS, CITING REASONS OF NATIONAL SECURITY.

IN OTHER WORDS, THEY'VE REMOVED THE NAMES AND ADDRESSES FROM BIO TECHNIX'S DATABASE, WHICH IS ILLEGAL.

FASCINATING. AND JUST HOW IS THIS SUPPOSED TO SELL ME ONE EXTRA COPY OF THE BUGLE?

THING IS, I KNOW FROM MY PREVIOUS NOTES THESE PEOPLE WERE ALL HIGH-LEVEL MILITARY OR STRATEGICALLY PLACED IN THE ESPIONAGE COMMUNITY -- ALL OF WHOM HAVE NEEDED PROSTHETICS AFTER RECENT ACCIDENTS OR SURGERIES.

THAT DOESN'T STRIKE YOU AS ***WEIRD?***

REMIND ME AGAIN WHY IT SHOULD.

WELL, THE FIRST QUESTION I GOTTA ASK MYSELF IS HOW COME MILES HAS SO MANY FRIENDS WHO CAN'T KEEP THEIR ***LIMBS*** ATTACHED?

ROBBIE, THIS IS ALL COMMENDABLE REPORTING -- I MEAN IT. BUT UNLESS YOU GOT AN ALIEN CONSPIRACY AND THE POPE'S SECRET LOVE-CHILD, YOU AIN'T GOT ***NUTHIN'***.

NOW, ***ALIENS*** -- THAT'S SOMETHIN' I CAN ***WORK*** WITH...

THIS IS THE PLACE DAREDEVIL TOLD ME TO CHECK OUT.

AS I COME OVER THE ROOFTOPS, MY INTUITION'S HAVING *KITTENS.*

BIOTEC

THERE'S SOMETHING MORE HERE THAN MEETS THE EYE: IT'S *QUIET.*

THEY'RE NOT EXPECTING TROUBLE. I'M GUESSING THAT'S BECAUSE MOST OF THE PEOPLE IN THE BUILDING ARE LEGIT.

BUT THERE'S DEFINITELY AN UNDERCURRENT, COMING FROM UP AHEAD.

DOWN *THERE:* DON'T KNOW WHAT'S *WRONG* YET...

...BUT SOMETHING SMELLS *FISHY...*

...LIKE *OCTOPUS.*

AH, YES... PERFECT...

Y'KNOW, WHERE I COME FROM, THEY DON'T ALLOW HOMICIDAL SOCIOPATHS TO PLAY WITH SCREWDRIVERS.

AND WHICH REVOLTING LITTLE TOADSTOOL WOULD *THAT* BE, SPIDER-MAN? AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOW CAN I PERSUADE YOU TO GO *BACK* THERE AND LEAVE ME ALONE?

TEK

THAT'S PRETTY FUNNY, DOC. YOU'LL GO FAR IN THE FIELD OF PRISON ENTERTAINMENT --

WELL, NOW...AREN'T YOU THE COMICAL LITTLE SPIDER?

WHACK

UHH--

OH, YEAH...I REMEMBER YOU -- YOU'RE THE SUPER-VILLAIN WHO FIGHTS LIKE A COMPUTER NERD.

BEATLEMANIA WAS, LIKE, FIFTY BILLION YEARS AGO, BY THE WAY.

I'VE ***MISSED*** YOU, SPIDER-MAN -- I'VE MISSED YOUR PUERILE HUMOR AND I'VE MISSED HAVING SPORT WITH YOUR VARIOUS LIMBS.

SPORT, HUH? OKAY --

WHAM

-- I'LL BE THE BOWLING BALL, YOU CAN BE THE SEVEN-TEN SPLIT.

YAAAH!

...HHH... THAT WAS YOUR ONE AND ONLY CHANCE. DON'T EXPECT ANOTHER ...HHH... YOU MEDDLESOME ARACHNID --

OOH. I LOVE IT WHEN YOU TALK FANCY.

WHOOOSH

SMASH

HEY, I GOT ONE: "CEASE AND DESIST, YOU CERTIFIABLE CEPHALOPOD!"

MAYBE YOU SHOULD'VE CALLED YOURSELF DOC LOBSTER.

WHAM WHAM

NO, WAIT... I GOT A BETTER ONE: THE *SCALLOP!*

HEY, COME BACK! I'M NOT FINISHED LAUGHING AT YOU YET!

BAMM

COME AND GET ME IF YOU *DARE*, SPIDER-MAN!

SMASH

...HHH... =HUFF=...

SKREEE

WELL, THIS WAS A CLEVER PLAN: *"TRAP SELF IN CUBICLE."* I SHOULD BE TAKING NOTES.

YOU WON'T TAKE ME ALIVE, BOY. YOU DON'T HAVE THE NERVE TO *TRY* --

PUT THE METAL CALAMARI AWAY, OTTO. WE'RE GOING FOR A RIDE DOWNTOWN, YOU AN' ME --

I'M NOT WHO YOU *THINK* I AM.

LOOK BEHIND YOU.

HMM... *WHAT --?*

POW

UHHN--

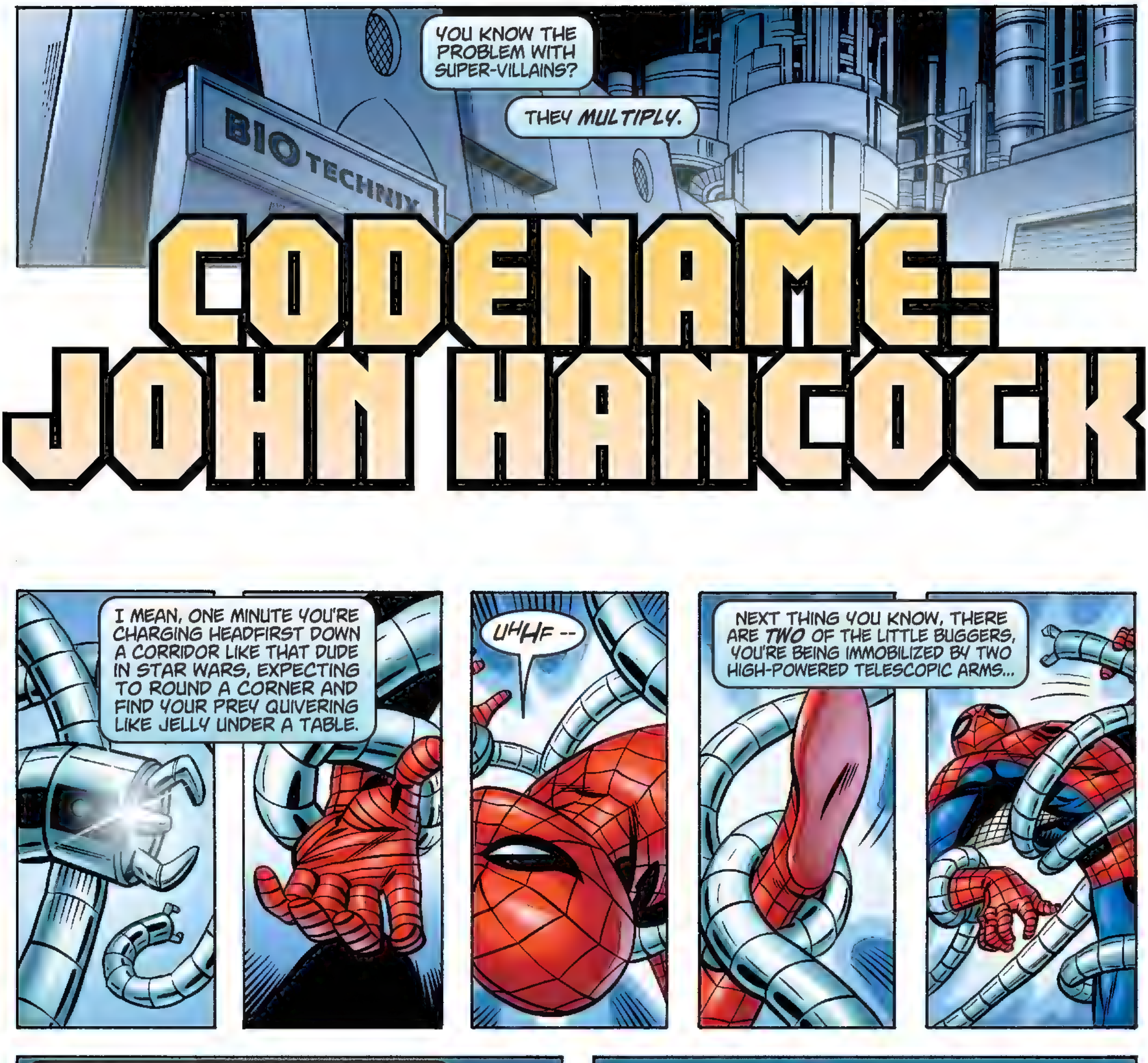
MARVEL COMICS

MARVEL PG 40 136

PETER PARKER™ SPIDER-MAN

RAMOS/FAUCHER

JENKINS
BUCKINGHAM
FAUCHER


YOU KNOW THE PROBLEM WITH SUPER-VILLAINS?
THEY MULTIPLY.
BIOTECHNIX
CODENAME: JOHN HANCOCK
I MEAN, ONE MINUTE YOU'RE CHARGING HEADFIRST DOWN A CORRIDOR LIKE THAT DUDE IN STAR WARS, EXPECTING TO ROUND A CORNER AND FIND YOUR PREY QUIVERING LIKE JELLY UNDER A TABLE.
UHHF --
NEXT THING YOU KNOW, THERE ARE TWO OF THE LITTLE BUGGERS, YOU'RE BEING IMMOBILIZED BY TWO HIGH-POWERED TELESCOPIC ARMS...
...YOU'VE GOT ADENOIDAL CACKLING NOISES IN YOUR EARS, AND THE SMELL OF WARM FISH BREATH WAFTING EVER SO GENTLY UP YOUR NOSTRILS.
ONE QUESTION, SPIDER-MAN: HOW DID YOU KNOW?

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UHH...WELL, THERE'S A FIRST: TWO CRAZED VILLAINS IN ONE SECRET HEADQUARTERS... HHH...

...WHAT'RE THE CHANCES --?

WHACK

WHACK

DON'T PLAY WITH ME, SPIDER-MAN. YOU KNOW ABOUT THE DEVICE, AND YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SIGNATURE TECHNOLOGY -- THAT MUCH IS CLEAR.

I WANT TO KNOW WHOM YOU'RE WORKING FOR. ANSWER ME!

DEVICE, HUH? >HKK<... DON'T SUPPOSE YOU KNOW THE VULTURE?

ONLY IT OCCURS TO ME YOU EVILDOER-TYPES ALL SAW AUSTIN POWERS AT THE SAME CINEMA.

VERY WELL.

KILL HIM, OCTAVIUS.

NOTHING WOULD GIVE ME GREATER PLEASURE, MY DEAR FUSION. SAY GOODBYE, SPIDER-MAN... OR WHATEVER IT IS YOU PEOPLE *DO* WHEN YOU DIE!

OH, WAIT... *HK*K...THAT DEVICE... I *GOT* IT NOW...

I THOUGHT YOU WERE TALKING TO EACH *OTHER* --

I *KNOW* YOU, CRETIN. I'VE SPENT DAYS AND NIGHTS STUDYING YOUR METHODS AND TENDENCIES, INCLUDING THAT MOST ANNOYING HABIT YOU HAVE OF MAKING JOKES TO COMPENSATE FOR YOUR FEELINGS OF INSECURITY.

I HOPE YOUR FINAL JOKE IS A *GOOD* ONE: ONLY *GOD* IS GOING TO HEAR THE PUNCHLINE.

...*HHH*...JUDGING FROM THE EXISTENCE OF YOU TWO MOOKS... *HH*K...

...AT LEAST HE HAS A SENSE OF *HUMOR* --

AFTER ALL THE EFFORT I'VE SPARED TO RETRIEVE THE DEVICE -- ALL OF IT IN THE NAME OF HUNTING YOU DOWN -- AND THE IRONY IS, I SIMPLY NEEDED TO RAISE A RED FLAG AND WATCH YOU COME RUNNING --

YEAH, WELL... YOU'RE FORGETTING ONE THING *I* KNOW THAT YOU ***DON'T***...

REALLY? AND WHAT WOULD THAT BE?

THIS IDIOT PUTS TOO MUCH GREASE ON HIS FAKE ARMS.

WHAT --?

BONK

SMAK

AAH --!

THUDD

HAW! HEHH...YOU CAN'T STOP HIM, YOU CAN ONLY HOPE TO *CONTAIN* HIM!

GIVE MY DISDAIN TO ALL THE *OTHER* CRAPPY SUPER-VILLAINS, BOYS!

NNN... OCTAVIUS-- GET OUT OF MY WAY! I CAN'T GET A CLEAR *SHOT* --

WAIT... "*CRAPPY SUPER-VILLAIN*": ISN'T THAT AN *OXYMORON?*

AFTER HIM!

DID YOU HEAR ME, OCTAVIUS? I SAID *AFTER HIM!*

...NNN... YOU CAN'T *MAKE* ME, FUSION...

...I'M NOT YOUR SLAVE...

YES, YOU ARE.

NOW, GO.

SEE4A, DOC! TELL 4OUR GIRLFRIEND THANKS FOR SHARING HIS MASTER PLAN, B4 THE WA4 --

4OU CAN TELL HIM 4OURSELF, SPIDER-MAN -- WHEN I SCRAPE 4OU OFF THE FLOOR AND DRAG 4OU BACK TO HIS FEET, OF COURSE.

ASSUMING 4OU HAVE THE STRENGTH TO *BREATHE.*

CLOSE THE EMERGENCY DOORS! ***NOW!***

I'M WARNING 4OU, OCTAVIUS -- IF 4OU LET HIM GET AWA4 --

HEADS UP, CHUMS! I NEED THIS...

...AND *THIS!*

OKA4. BUT NOT *THAT.*

BOOM

=HUFF=...
OH, JEEZ...
...SOMEBODY HOLD THAT DOOR!

NOT A CHANCE, SPIDER-MAN.
THOSE ITEMS BELONG TO ME I BELIEVE --

SORRY DOC, PROPERTY IS THEFT.
GOTTA GO!
AA-UHH --!

PSSHT

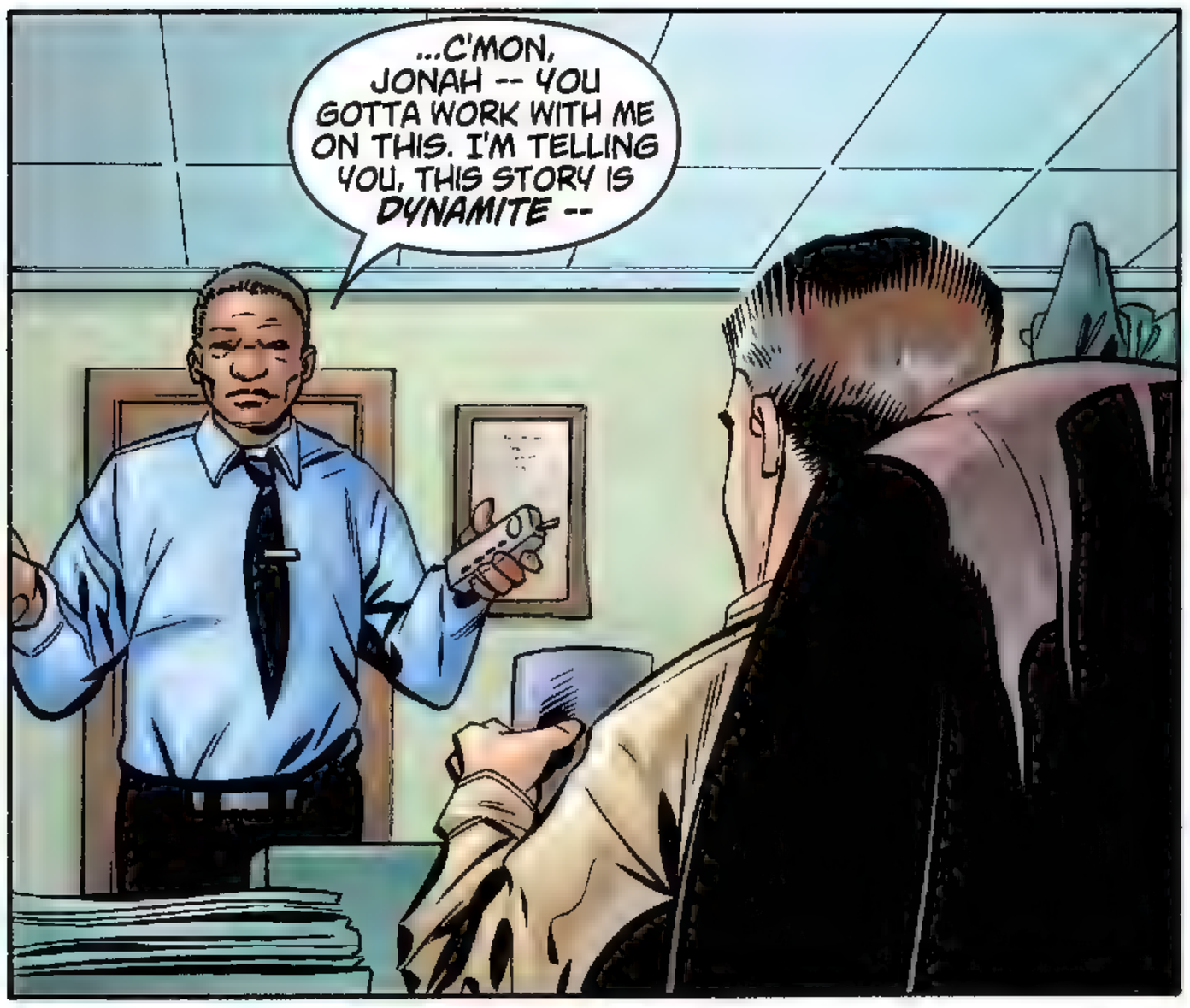
THUDD

THE SECURITY DOORS -- GET THEM UP!
OCTAVIUS, DON'T JUST STAND THERE, MAN!

FORGIVE ME, FUSION -- I... I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BEST NOT TO MAKE A COMMOTION OUTSIDE THE BUILDING.
I DIDN'T THINK YOU WOULD WANT ME TO ATTRACT ATTENTION TO OUR PRESENCE HERE.

I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO THINK, MORON -- I EXPECT YOU TO OBEY.

WORLD'S MOST CANTANKEROUS DAD


...C'MON, JONAH -- YOU GOTTA WORK WITH ME ON THIS. I'M TELLING YOU, THIS STORY IS DYNAMITE --

OH YEAH? AND HOW COME IT'S DYNAMITE TODAY? 'CAUSE IT SURE WASN'T YESTERDAY.
WORLD'S MOST CANTANKEROUS DAD

I HAD ANOTHER ANONYMOUS PHONE TIP, CHIEF -- SOME NEW INFORMATION THAT'S REALLY GOING TO BLOW THE LID OFF THIS STORY. WE GOTTA RUN WITH THIS BEFORE SOMEONE ELSE GETS WIND OF IT.

WHY? SO I CAN HAVE THE TV GUYS ALL OVER MY BACK WHEN YOUR DYNAMITE BLOWS UP IN OUR FACES?

JONAH, LISTEN TO ME: I GOT A HUNCH ON THIS ONE. IF I'M RIGHT, IT'S GONNA SELL A BOATLOAD --

WORLD'S MOST CANTANKEROUS DAD

A HUNCH, HUH?
OKAY, HOTSHOT -- KNOCK YOURSELF OUT.

BUT IF THIS PIECE TAKES OFF, IT WAS MY IDEA.

WELL, IF I WAS LOOKING FOR *"COMPLETELY USELESS,"* THEN I'VE HIT THE JACKPOT WITH THE CONTENTS OF DOC'S BRIEFCASE.

TCH. NO WONDER THESE GUYS ARE SO DISORGANIZED...

PLAYSQUID

BIOtech

x4

Destino, Alex--recipient

917-4 042

?

GL52 ?

JOHN HANCOCK

DEPARTURES

THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT *"GL-52"* IS SUPPOSED TO MEAN. BUT THANKS TO MY FRIENDS IN THE FUNNY SUITS, IT DOESN'T TAKE SHERLOCK HOLMES TO FIGURE A WAY TO FIND *OUT...*

FZZZT

BRNNG

I GOT IT, HON!

HELLO... DESTINO RESIDENCE --

UH, HI. IS THIS ALEX?

NO, THIS IS HIS WIFE. ALEX IS OUT IN THE GARDEN. WHO'S CALLING, PLEASE?

THIS IS, UH... JOHN HANCOCK. FROM BIOTECHNIX.

BIOTECHNIX? ARE YOU THE POOL CLEANERS?

NO, NO... I'M JUST CALLING TO ARRANGE DELIVERY OF YOUR HUSBAND'S NEW PROSTHETIC ARM --

PROSTHETIC ARM? OH... HEHH... I'M AFRAID YOU MUST HAVE THE WRONG NUMBER, MISTER HANCOCK.

MY HUSBAND IS A COLONEL IN THE MARINES. HE'S IN PERFECT HEALTH --

-- OH MY GOD!

CRASH

EEEE

I CAN'T DO AS YOU ASK, FUSION. EVERYTHING'S MOVING TOO QUICKLY--

LET ME MAKE ONE THING CLEAR, MILES: I'M *NOT* ASKING.

YOU'LL DO EXACTLY AS I TELL YOU FOR AS LONG AS I SAY, OR I'LL HAVE TO DROP YOUR PANTS --

-- AND CLAIM YOU'RE TUTANKHAMEN ***REINCARNATED*** ON NATIONAL TELEVISION. THE CHOICE IS YOURS.

FUSION, PLEASE... IF WE'RE EXPOSED AT THIS EARLY JUNCTURE, THERE ARE GOING TO BE SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS. HOW CAN I BE OF SERVICE TO YOU IF I PUT MY REPUTATION IN SUCH JEOPARDY?

I DON'T ***CARE*** ABOUT YOUR REPUTATION. THERE'S BEEN A ***SETBACK*** -- SOME HIGHLY INCRIMINATING INFORMATION WAS STOLEN FROM BIOTECHNIX TODAY.

BY SPIDER-MAN, NO LESS. I CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO WASTE TIME WITH TRIVIALITIES SUCH AS YOUR POLITICAL CAREER.

I WANT TO MOVE FORWARD OUR SCHEDULE FOR DELIVERY OF THE DEVICE--

WHAT? MOVE FORWARD TO WHEN?

TONIGHT.

...HEY LITTLE GIRL IS YOUR DADDY HOME... DID HE GO 'WAY AN' LEAVE YOU ALL A-LOONE, MH-HMM... DAH-DAH DUT-DUT DAAH...

PIZZA

...OH-WOH-WOH, I'M O-KAY...

CRIK

YOU WANT A *HAND* WITH THAT?

WELL, THIS ABOUT MAKES MY WEEK. HOW COME EVERY HALF-BAKED VIGILANTE IN A BALLET SUIT KNOWS WHERE I *LIVE*, FER PETE'S SAKE?

DAREDEVIL TOLD ME. YOU KNOW WHAT HE'S LIKE.

UH-HUH... SURE. AN' TO WHAT DO I OWE THE PLEASURE?

THE INTERNET, ACTUALLY. I WAS ON ONE OF THOSE NUT-JOB CONSPIRACY SITES LAST NIGHT -- YOU SHOULDA SEEN THE MOUND OF INFORMATION THEY HAD ON THERE ABOUT "GL-52."

THAT'S THE MILITARY'S CODENAME FOR AREA 52, ISN'T IT?

GROOM LAKE? YOU BEEN READING TOO MUCH SCIENCE FICTION, SPIDER-MAN. GROOM LAKE DOESN'T *EXIST*.

SURE IT DOESN'T. LOOK, HOW ABOUT WE CUT THE COW-PIE, COLONEL FURY, AND GET DOWN TO BUSINESS.

I THINK I GOT SOMETHING YOU NEED, AND *VICE VERSA*. I'LL BET YOU LIKE NOTHING MORE THAN A GOOD CONSPIRACY YOURSELF -- YOU STRIKE ME AS THE DISTURBED, COMPUTER GEEK-TYPE.

WHAT D'YOU HAVE IN MIND?

HOW ABOUT AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION?

AN' THIS SIGNIFIES *WHAT*, EXACTLY?

YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE NEWEST PROTOTYPE DEVELOPED FOR THE BIOTECHNIX CORPORATION. WORD ON THE STREET IS, BIOTECHNIX IS A KNOWN FRONT FOR THE ROSETTI CRIME FAMILY.

IT GETS BETTER.

I SAW ON TV ABOUT SOME FRENCH GUY RECENTLY, HAD HIS ARMS SEVERED IN A CAR ACCIDENT. HE WAS THE FIRST RECIPIENT OF TWO NEW DONOR HANDS FROM BIOTECHNIX. HIS BRAIN ACTUALLY REWIRED ITSELF TO ACCOMMODATE THE ELECTRONIC SIGNALS AND PRESTO: HE'S BACK TO HIS CAREER AS A BAGUETTE DELIVERY BOY --

AMAZING. IS THERE A POINT TO THIS HEARTWARMING TALE?

I SUGGEST YOU HAVE YOUR GUYS LOOK CLOSELY AT THE HAND. THERE'S A PROCESSOR NEAR THE WRIST THAT TAKES THE ELECTRONIC SIGNALS AND PROCESSES THEM INTO INFORMATION.

YOU GOT MY GOOD EAR'S ATTENTION. KEEP GOIN'.

IT'S ALSO A TWO-WAY RECEIVER, ALLOWING SIGNALS TO BE RETURNED TO THE BRAIN. THE FEED GOES DIRECTLY INTO THE NERVES, AND THERE'S A TRANSMITTER HIDDEN UNDER THE FINGERNAIL.

IN OTHER WORDS, IF SOME NUTCASE OR OTHER DECIDED TO KEEP TABS ON HIS EVIL EMPIRE USING MIND-CONTROL, HE'D HAVE AN ARMY OF AMPUTEES WALKING AROUND THE COUNTRY DOING HIS BIDDING.

THAT'S PRETTY HOT STUFF. YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO'S RESPONSIBLE?

UH-UH... IT'S MY TURN.

I WANNA KNOW HOW JOHN HANCOCK FITS IN.

HOW'D YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT?

I PRIED IT OUT OF THE DEAD ARMS OF A CRAZED SUPER-VILLAIN. SO, WHO'S JOHN HANCOCK?

IT AIN'T A WHO... IT'S A ***WHAT***. IT'S A TRACKING DEVICE, ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO TRACE RADIATION SIGNATURES FROM SPACE.

WE USE IT TO TELL WHERE DEVELOPING NATIONS ARE TESTING NUCLEAR WEAPONS -- THE BOMBS LEAVE A RESIDUAL AMOUNT OF RADIATION IN THE AIR AFTER AN EXPLOSION. JOHN HANCOCK WAS THE SATELLITE CONTROL.

WAS? WHAT D'YOU MEAN, "WAS?"

SOME ROGUE GENERAL A WHILE BACK -- NAME OF ***RYKER*** -- WAS USING IT TO TRACK THE MOVEMENTS OF THE HULK FROM SPACE. IT'S A LONG STORY: THE SHORT VERSION IS, THIS GUY WAS VERY, ***VERY*** HIGHLY PLACED, AND WASTING THE TAXPAYERS' MONEY AT AN ALARMING RATE.

HAD A JONES ON FOR THE HULK YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE. HE WAS USING GROOM LAKE AS A BASE OF OPERATIONS TO TRACK OL' GREENIE DOWN.

WAITAMINNIT -- ARE YOU SAYING THIS DEVICE COULD BE CALIBRATED TO TRACK DOWN CERTAIN TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS, BASED ON THEIR PERSONAL RADIATION SIGNATURE?

SURE IT COULD. IF WE COULD ***FIND*** IT.

SOMEONE TOOK THE DEVICE OUT OF GL-52 JUST LAST NIGHT -- THAT'S WHY I'M SURPRISED YOU HEARD ABOUT IT SO SOON.

THE CULPRIT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A LONG-TIME EMPLOYEE. WE'RE MORE THAN A LITTLE CONCERNED THE TECHNOLOGY COULD FALL INTO THE WRONG HANDS.

IT ALREADY HAS.

THIS GUY WHO STOLE THE DEVICE: FIVE SQUILLION BUCKS SAYS HE'S A RECENT ***AMPUTEE,*** RIGHT?

BINGO. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THAT'S SOMETHING WE OVERLOOKED 'CAUSE THE GUY CHECKED OUT ON EVERY LEVEL OTHERWISE. BUT I HAPPEN TO KNOW FER A FACT HE WAS RECENTLY REASSIGNED TO A DESK JOB AT GROOM LAKE AFTER A BOATING ACCIDENT.

YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO HAVE AN IDEA WHAT THE CONNECTION IS HERE, WOULD YOU, SPIDER-MAN?

SPIDER-MAN?

I'LL GET BACK TO YOU ON THAT.

AT LAST, OCTAVIUS: WE FINALLY HAVE THE MEANS TO BRING ABOUT SPIDER-MAN'S LONG OVERDUE ***DEMISE***.

IF I'M RIGHT ABOUT THE SOURCE OF HIS POWERS, HE MORE THAN LIKELY EMANATES A SUBTLE AND ***UNIQUE*** RADIATION SIGNATURE.

AND WITH THE "*JOHN HANCOCK*" DEVICE, I'LL BE ABLE TO HUNT HIM LIKE A FIGHTER PLANE CHASING A HOT-AIR BALLOON.

I'LL BE ABLE TO WALTZ UP TO HIS FRONT DOOR WHENEVER I CHOOSE.

WHAT OF OUR MAN WHO SO FREELY SAW FIT TO DELIVER THE STOLEN DEVICE, FUSION? HOW CAN WE BE ASSURED THE S.H.I.E.L.D. OPERATIVE WON'T ***TALK?***

PLEASE... I SHOULDN'T BE HERE... I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO BE HERE...

BECAUSE HE'S STILL UNDER MY DIRECT ***CONTROL,*** THANKS TO THE TELEPATHIC CONNECTION AMPLIFIED BY HIS PROSTHETIC LIMB.

I ASSURE YOU, HE'LL HAVE NO RECOLLECTION OF WHAT'S HAPPENED. WHAT'S MORE, HE REMAINS THE ONLY WITNESS TO THIS ENTIRE AFFAIR --

THAT'S WHAT I ***THOUGHT.***

NN-AAHH!

SPLUT

OCTAVIUS! WHAT ARE YOU DOING, YOU IDIOT? I DIDN'T GIVE YOU THAT ORDER --

YOU *DIDN'T*? PERHAPS I MISHEARD --

YOU ARE MY SERVANT. STAND DOWN.

WHACK

GHUUHH!

WHACK

YOU ODIOUS LITTLE UPSTART -- DID YOU REALLY THINK YOU WERE GOING TO CONTROL AN INTELLECT SUCH AS MINE?

THAT RIDICULOUS NOTION SUGGESTS YOU'RE MORE PRONE TO FANTASIES THAN YOUR VICTIMS.

NO... YOU CAN'T...

...IT'S NOT *POSSIBLE* --

WHACK

ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE, YOU RANK AMATEUR. I WAS NEVER YOUR SERVANT.

YOU WERE ALWAYS *MINE.*

WAUMP

YOU... YOU LIED TO ME. YOU LIED!

FIRST RULE OF KINDERGARTEN: LEARN HOW TO ACT, IN ORDER TO SURVIVE... AND GET WHAT YOU WANT. I WAS ALWAYS RATHER GOOD AT IT.

CAN YOU IMAGINE: ME WITH A PET OCTOPUS NAMED OLGA, TINKERING IN SECRET FOR A DEMENTED MAN IN A PLASTIC MASK?

UHH --

CAN YOU IMAGINE: A CRIMINAL OF MY SOPHISTICATION CONTROLLED BY A CUT-RATE CONJURER SUCH AS YOU?

YOU'D HAVE TO BE A FOOL TO SEE SENSE IN THAT EQUATION.

N-NO...WHAT ARE YOU --?

=GUKK=...

KRAK

PTSH

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING I LIKE LESS THAN A FOOL, FUSION:

A MATERIAL WITNESS.

...AND NOW, FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SCANDAL OF CONGRESSMAN BRADLEY MILES, FIRST BROKEN IN EARLY EDITIONS OF TODAY'S DAILY BUGLE.

AS REPORTED EARLIER ON THE PROGRAM, MILES REMAINS IN CUSTODY WHILE POLICE INVESTIGATORS SIFT THROUGH HUNDREDS OF DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO ALLEGED FRAUD AND STOCK MANIPULATION CARRIED OUT FROM WITHIN HIS MANHATTAN OFFICES.

NYNEWS

NYNEWS

ALSO UNDER INVESTIGATION, EXECUTIVES OF THE MEDICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMPANY, BIOTECHNIX.

$500

NY NEWS

IN A STATEMENT RELEASED EARLIER TODAY, A POLICE SPOKESMAN OFFERED INFORMATION LINKING BIOTECHNIX TO MEMBERS OF ORGANIZED CRIME...

TV & AUDIO STORE

$500

...AND IN A SHOCKING DEVELOPMENT, BUGLE JOURNALIST ROBBIE ROBERTSON MAY HAVE UNCOVERED EVIDENCE LINKING BIOTECHNIX'S FOUNDER AND C.E.O., AMOS PETERS, WITH RECENT BREACHES OF SECURITY AT AN UNDISCLOSED MILITARY INSTALLATION...

...AS YET UNSUBSTANTIATED, BUT GIVEN THE INHERENT PARANOIA OF INFORMATION SURROUNDING THE STOLEN SECRETS...

...OFFERED NO COMMENT, CITING REASONS OF NATIONAL SECURITY...

IT'S NOT *OVER.*

WITH FUSION AND DOC OCK STILL AT LARGE, IT *CAN'T* BE OVER.

I GET THIS...*SENSE* OF THINGS, YOU KNOW? A SENSE THAT THINGS ARE ABOUT TO GET WORSE BEFORE THEY GET BETTER.

RIGHT NOW, I'M GETTING THE SENSE S.H.I.E.L.D. HAS ACTED TOO QUICKLY BY GOING AFTER MILES, AND BY THE TIME THE F.B.I. AND THE N.Y.P.D. HAVE COME TO AN AGREEMENT ON PROCEDURE, I'LL HAVE FIFTY TONS OF NUKES RAINED ON ME FROM ABOVE.

WAY I SEE IT, I'D BETTER CHECK OUT SOME OF BIOTECHNIX'S STORAGE FACILITIES BEFORE THAT HAPPENS. BECAUSE I HAVE A NAGGING FEELING WE ALL JUST JUMPED THROUGH A VERY LARGE *HOOP.*

AND AS I GET CLOSER TO PAY-DIRT, THAT NAGGING LITTLE FEELING'S GETTING *STRONGER.*

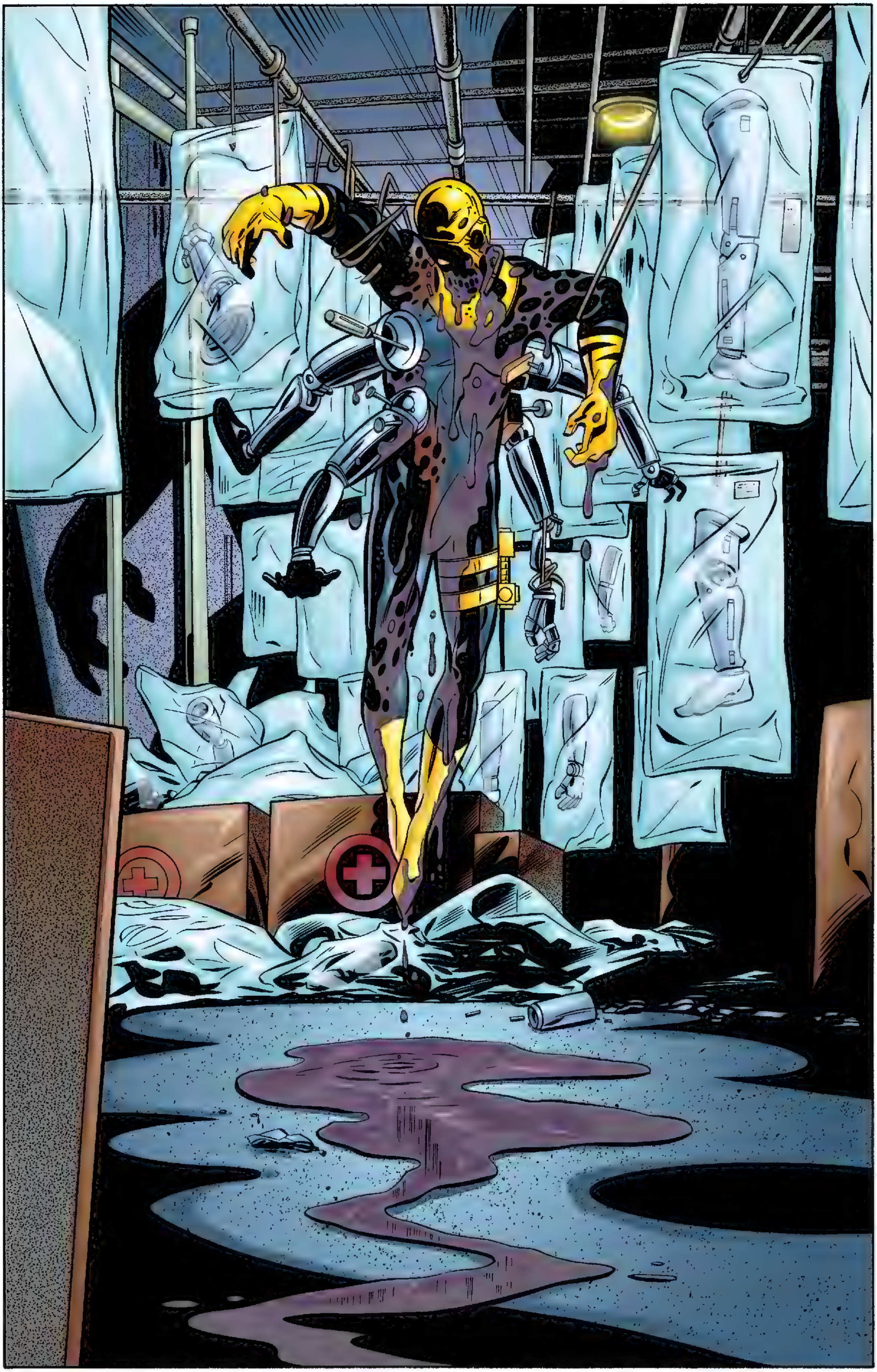
CREEK

PSST... HEY, BUDDY, YOU OKAY?

HE'S DEAD -- POOR GUY PROBABLY NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT HIM. BUT I KNOW, 'CAUSE I'VE SEEN DOC OCK'S HANDIWORK BEFORE.

BLUDGEONED TO DEATH BY A HEAVY METALLIC OBJECT -- JUDGING BY THE TRAIL OF BLOOD, I'D GUESS HE WAS DRAGGED OUT HERE FROM THE ADJACENT ROOM...

OH, JEEZ...



MARVEL COMICS

PETER PARKER

SPIDER-MAN®

MARVEL PG 41 139

RAMOS / FAUCHER

JENKINS
BUCKINGHAM
FAUCHER

THE OCTOPUS POSSESSES THE MOST COMPLEX BRAIN OF ANY INVERTEBRATE.

IT'S ALSO THE MOST ANTISOCIAL CREATURE IN THE OCEAN, WITH THE LONGEST *MEMORY*.

IN FACT, AN OCTOPUS CAN MAKE HOSTILITY LOOK LIKE AN ART FORM. IT'S YOUR TYPICAL *LONER-TYPE* -- IT'LL EVEN GO AS FAR AS TO BLOCK THE ENTRANCE TO ITS LAIR IN ORDER TO KEEP INTRUDERS AWAY.

YOU CAN SPOT AN OCTOPUS DEN BY LOCATING THE PILES OF EMPTY CRAB SHELLS THAT HAVE BEEN TOSSED OUT AFTER FEEDING.

IT DESTROYS ITS PREY BY *CRUSHING* THEM AND INJECTING POISON INTO THEIR NERVOUS SYSTEMS.

LOOKS LIKE THIS LITTLE CRAB GOT *LUCKY*.

THE INK-LIKE SUBSTANCE IS A MIXTURE OF KEROSENE AND MOTOR OIL.

THERE'S NO DOUBT THIS IS DOC OCK'S DOING. IT'S A *MESSAGE*:

*"I COULD HAVE **KILLED** HIM IF I WANTED TO. I COULD DO THE SAME TO YOU."*

BEEP

HELLO, EMERGENCY SERVICES? I NEED AN AMBULANCE OVER TO THE BIOTECHNIX WAREHOUSE ON DUNCAN STREET.

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MISSION: UNCOMFORTABLE

YEAH... I GOT A GUY HERE WHO'S BEEN BEATEN UP PRETTY BAD. HIS PULSE IS STRONG, BUT I'D ESTIMATE HE HAS BETWEEN TEN AND TWENTY BROKEN BONES -- MAINLY IMPACT FRACTURES.

ALSO, HE'S BEEN DOUSED WITH SOME KIND OF FLAMMABLE MATERIAL. YOU'RE GONNA NEED TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS THAT NO ONE ENTERS THE SCENE WITH ANY KIND OF OPEN FLAME --

SIR, I'M GOING TO NEED TO GET SOME DETAILS. HOW ARE YOU ASSOCIATED WITH THE VICTIM?

I JUST SAVED HIS *LIFE*, PROBABLY. HE'LL BE SPENDING THE REST OF IT IN JAIL.

OKAY, SIR -- WE HAVE A UNIT ON ITS WAY. I'LL NEED YOU TO STAY WITH THE INJURED PARTY UNTIL HELP ARRIVES, BUT MAKE SURE HE ISN'T MOVED.

CAN I GET SOME DETAILS FROM YOU, PLEASE?

LISTEN, LADY -- I CAN'T HANG AROUND HERE FOR REASONS THAT'LL BE OBVIOUS TO YOU GUYS IN ABOUT TEN MINUTES. JUST CALL ME A CONCERNED CITIZEN AND BRING EXTRA SOFT HANDCUFFS

SIR, I NEED TO KNOW YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS --!

SURE... YOU AN' ABOUT FIFTY MILLION OTHER PEOPLE --

BEEP

GOD, WHAT A MESS. THERE'S NOTHING MORE I CAN DO FOR FUSION NOW -- WHEN HE WAKES UP, IT'LL BE IN A HOSPITAL ROOM WITH *BARS* ON IT.

RIGHT NOW, I GOTTA TRACK DOWN THE LUNATIC WHO *DID* THIS TO HIM --

I RECOGNIZE THIS MATERIAL: IT'S A KIND OF PLIABLE BUILDING WRAP USED FOR INSULATION. I SAW IT ONCE BEFORE WHEN AUNT MAY HAD THE EXTENSION ADDED TO THE HOUSE IN QUEENS.

BEEP

CALL ME CRAZY, BUT I HAVE A NOTION THIS *MEANS* SOMETHING. I'D BETTER MAKE THIS QUICK BEFORE THE CAVALRY COMES CHARGING OVER THE HILL --

YEAH, HI... I'D LIKE TO SPEAK TO MATT MURDOCK, PLEASE. THIS IS PETER PARKER -- TELL HIM THIS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT.

PETER, IS THAT YOU? YOU KNOW I'VE ASKED YOU BEFORE NOT TO CALL ME DIRECTLY AT THIS OFFICE --

MATT, LISTEN TO ME: I GOT ONE OF THOSE *"CLOCK-TICKING, TIME EXPIRED"* DEALS GOING ON, KAPISCH?

YOU ONCE REPRESENTED A FORMER EMPLOYEE IN A LAWSUIT BROUGHT AGAINST BIOTECHNIX, RIGHT --?

HOW ON EARTH DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT?

PLOMA

I MAKE IT MY ***BUSINESS*** TO KNOW. LOOK, ABOUT BIOTECHNIX... ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY RECENT CONSTRUCTION WORK BEING DONE FOR THAT COMPANY?

PETER, YOU KNOW I CAN'T ANSWER THAT QUESTION. IF I WERE TO BREAK THE CONFIDENCE OF ONE OF MY CLIENTS --

YEAH, I'VE SEEN THAT ATTORNEY/CLIENT THING ON COURT TV. BUT YOU GOT TO SEARCH YOUR HEART AND KNOW THAT THERE'S ***NO WAY*** I'D ASK YOU TO DO ANYTHING THAT'D PUT THAT IN JEOPARDY, MATT. THIS IS ***IMPORTANT.***

IF IT'S WHAT I THINK IT IS, WE'RE TALKING A SITUATION THAT COULD ENDANGER HUNDREDS AND POSSIBLY THOUSANDS OF LIVES.

SO HYPOTHETICALLY SPEAKING, IF YOU WERE A MAJOR BIO-MEDICAL RESEARCH COMPANY AND YOU WERE GOING TO CONSTRUCT A NEW BUILDING HERE IN MANHATTAN, WHERE WOULD YOU BUILD IT?

AT A ROUGH GUESS, I'D SAY SOMEWHERE AROUND 128TH AND DILBY STREET.

"HYPOTHETICALLY SPEAKING."

...WE'VE ARRIVED IN THE LOBBY OF THE BUILDING, AS YOU INSTRUCTED, DOCTOR OCTAVIUS. I'M CERTAIN WE WERE NOT DETECTED AS WE CAME IN. WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE US DO NOW?

MAKE YOUR WAY TO THE TEMPORARY ACCESS ELEVATOR LOCATED AT THE CENTER OF THE BUILDING, ADJOINING THE LOBBY. GO TO THE CONSTRUCTION AREA OF THE HIGHEST COMPLETED FLOOR, AND I WILL MEET YOU THERE.

I WOULD ADVISE STRONGLY THAT YOU CONTINUE TO FOLLOW MY INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LETTER. I ASSUME YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS PROVIDED THE REQUISITE PAYMENT, AS LAID FORTH IN MY ORIGINAL PROPOSAL?

NATURALLY, DOCTOR. AND I ASSUME YOU WERE ABLE TO ACQUIRE THE *"MERCHANDISE"*?

EXACTLY AS PLANNED, MY GOOD FRIEND.

EXACTLY AS PLANNED.

HE IS AN UNPREDICTABLE ONE, THIS "*DOCTOR OCTOPUS.*" WHAT LITTLE WE KNOW OF HIM SUGGESTS HE IS NOT TO BE TRUSTED. WE MUST BE ***CAREFUL,*** MANUEL.

ONCE THE DEAL IS DONE, WE ***KILL*** HIM --

BUMP

CHUG CHUG

DING

AH, WELCOME, GENTLEMEN --

HEYA, DOC! I FOUND THIS COOL-LOOKING SUITCASE ON THE ELEVATOR.

EVEN BETTER: IT CAME WITH TWO FREE TERRORISTS.

YOU!

WHY DO YOU DOG ME AT EVERY TURN, BOY?

WELL, YOU KNOW: I JUST LIKE TO SEE THAT GOOFY LOOK ON YOUR FACE WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'VE BEEN ***THWARTED.***

NICE PLAN BY THE WAY: THERE I AM THINKING YOU AND FUSION ARE AFTER THE TRACKING DEVICE SO'S YOU CAN GET TO ***ME,*** AND ALL THE WHILE IT WAS ABOUT ***MONEY.***

ALL THE SECRETS OF UNCLE SAM'S SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY, SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER. TELL ME: WAS IT GOING TO BE WORTH IT?

THIRTY MILLION DOLLARS IN UNTRACEABLE DIAMONDS, YOU VACUOUS LITTLE BRAT. THOSE DIAMONDS BELONG TO ME.

HAND THEM OVER.

UH-UH. YOU DIDN'T SAY PLEASE.

YOW!

KRUNCH

OH, OTTO... WE CAN'T GO ON *MEETING* LIKE THIS...

...THE OTHER HEROES ARE STARTING TO *SUSPECT* --

YOU THINK I'M AMUSED, SPIDER-MAN? *DO* YOU?

I HAVE MORE STAMINA FOR *KILLING* THAN YOU HAVE FOR TELLING JOKES, YOU IGNORANT CUR --

WELL, FOR SUCH A HEADSTRONG GUY, YOU SURE HAVE A SOFT NOGGIN!

BOSH

BLAM

YOU'LL NEED TO DO BETTER THAN *THAT*, CRETIN --

BOOM

BOOM

GH-AHH!

HA HA! RUN, LITTLE SPIDER -- RUN AS FAST AS YOU *CAN!*

MY ARMS ARE FASTER AND STRONGER THAN EVER BEFORE --

UHH... NICE SHOT, DOC... BUT MAYBE IT'S TIME TO WAKE UP AN' SMELL THE SMOKE. YOU'RE ABOUT TO BECOME ***OBSOLETE,*** IN CASE YOU DIDN'T NOTICE. THE WORLD'S NOT JUST ABOUT MONEY ANYMORE.

THAT DEPENDS ON YOUR PERSPECTIVE, SPIDER-MAN: NAMELY, WHETHER YOU ARE LOOKING UP OR LOOKING ***DOWN*** --

Y'KNOW, I'M LOSING ALL ***RESPECT*** I HAD FOR YOU. FUSION'S A NUTCASE, BUT AT LEAST HE'S AN ***HONEST*** ONE.

FUSION IS A FOOL FOR ALLOWING HIMSELF TO BECOME SO VULNERABLE. IT'S ALL VERY WELL CULTIVATING A HEALTHY ***HATRED,*** SPIDER-MAN, BUT WHERE'S THE GAIN IN ALLOWING YOURSELF TO BE ***CONSUMED*** BY IT?

HHH... SO, YOUR WAY'S ***BETTER,*** HUH? EXTORTION, DESTRUCTION, MURDER AND ***GREED?***

BETTER GREED THAN ***STUPIDITY.*** I CHANNEL MY HATRED FOR YOU INTO SOMETHING MUCH MORE POSITIVE -- NAMELY, MY BANK ACCOUNT.

UHH... YOU'RE NOT FOOLING ME FOR A SECOND, DOC. YOU DON'T HATE ME.

YOU DON'T ***CARE*** ABOUT ANYONE ENOUGH TO HATE THEM.

TOUCHÉ.

BLAMM

BLAMM

PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT, SPIDER-MAN: PERHAPS I'M JUST A SOULLESS MONSTER WITH NO CAPACITY TO DESPISE ANYONE.

UHH --

BUT IN YOUR CASE, I'M WILLING TO MAKE AN *EXCEPTION.*

WHACK

BLAMMO

NO -- MY TRACKING DEVICE! HOW COULD YOU --

THAT'S ONE FALL EACH, DOC...

...BEST TWO OUT OF THREE?

GIVE ME THAT SUITCASE! I *DEMAND* IT!

THWIP

C'MON, YOU WIG-WEARING, GOGGLE-EYED FREAK. HOW 'BOUT WE PLAY *TAG* FOR IT?

AS YOU WISH, SPIDER-MAN. UNLIKE YOU, I PLAY TO WIN...

...AND BOTH MY *KNEES* WORK, IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME.

HA! HEHH... WHAT'S THE MATTER, BOY? NOWHERE TO GO BUT DOWN?

THAT'S WHAT I LOVE ABOUT YOU, DOC: YOUR CRUDDY JOKES ALWAYS MAKE MINE SEEM FUNNIER.

YOU WANT *THIS*, HUH?

HAND IT OVER, SPIDER-MAN, OR --

OR *WHAT?* YOU'LL BE *UPSET* WITH ME? I'M CRUSHED.

OR AFTER I'VE KILLED YOU, I WILL FIND A HUNDRED INNOCENT BYSTANDERS AND KILL THEM *TOO.*

YOU'RE THE AMATEUR PSYCHOLOGIST: *YOU* DECIDE IF I'M CAPABLE OF SUCH A THING.

THE OLD NUTCASE ROUTINE, *HUH?*

WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY: *"FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE."*

SMASH

NO! YOU IDIOT -- DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE? I'LL KILL YOU!

UHF --!

WHUK

:GKK: HAVEN'T YOU WORKED IT OUT YET, DOC...? :HTT:

DON'T FORGET: I'M STRONGER THAN YOU ARE...

PERHAPS, SPIDER-MAN, BUT MY ARMS ARE STRONGER *STILL*. YOU'VE SIGNED THE DEATH WARRANT OF A HUNDRED VICTIMS THANKS TO YOUR STUBBORN STUPIDITY --

NO... :HKK:...

I MEAN, "DON'T FORGET: I'M **STRONGER** THAN YOU ARE..."

BZZAAK!

ARRRGH!

THWIPP

KEE-RUNCH

SKREET

SPIDER-MAN, PLEASE... I'M SLIPPING...

...HELP ME...

JUST LIKE OLD TIMES, *HUH*, OTTO? SOMEONE LOSES THEIR CAT UP A TREE, AND HERE COMES THE DUTIFUL HERO, LIKE A MOUSE AFTER CHEESE.

AN' YOU... YOU'VE LONG SINCE WORKED OUT THAT MY WEAKEST POINT IS ***MORALITY.*** I PULL YOU OUT OF THE FIRE, AND YOU COME BACK AND ***BURN*** ME, 'CAUSE THAT'S THE WAY YOU PLAY THE GAME.

WELL, MAYBE IT'S TIME I CHANGED THE RULES. MAYBE THIS TIME, I LET YOU ***FALL.***

AH-HEHH... HAHH... YOU DON'T HAVE IT *IN* YOU, BOY. YOU'D NEVER LET A MAN FALL TO HIS DEATH WITHOUT DOING ALL IN YOUR POWER TO SAVE HIM, AND WE BOTH ***KNOW*** IT.

WHAT OF ALL THE IMPROVEMENTS I'VE PIONEERED IN BIO-ELECTRONICS AND PROSTHETICS? JUST IMAGINE: A QUADRIPLEGIC WALKING FREELY, JUST AS A HEALTHY PERSON WOULD. YOU WOULD NEVER DARE SACRIFICE THAT POTENTIAL FOR SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT!

YEAH... YOU'D ***THINK*** THAT, WOULDN'T YOU? ONLY YOU AND I BOTH KNOW, THE CHANCES OF YOU COUGHING UP THE GOODS ARE, LIKE ***ZERO***.

I ALWAYS SAVE THE DAY, NO MATTER WHICH WAY THE WIND IS BLOWING.

BUT IN YOUR CASE, I'M WILLING TO MAKE AN ***EXCEPTION*** --

NO! YOU CAN'T ***DO*** THIS!

AAAHHH

THWIP

YOU'RE RIGHT: I *CAN'T.*

NOT EVEN TO A STAIN ON HUMANITY LIKE *YOU.*

SMACK

WHAT, AREN'T YOU GOING TO *THANK* ME?

YOU COULDN'T HAVE KEPT THE FREAKIN' THING IN ONE *PIECE?* THAT'S A LOT OF TIME AND MONEY WE GOTTA GO TO, FIGURING THIS THING OUT AGAIN.

WELL, YOU CAN HAND THE BILL TO DOCTOR OCTOPUS -- AN' WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, TELL HIM HE OWES ME FOR A NEW SUIT.

HE AND THIRTY MILLION DOLLARS' WORTH OF ILLICIT DIAMONDS ARE WAITING FOR YOU INSIDE A COCOON AT THE TOP OF THE NEW BIOTECHNIX BUILDING, BY THE WAY. YOU'D BETTER HURRY: I THINK HE MIGHT BE RUNNING OUT OF *AIR.*

YOU DID A LOT OF **GOOD** TODAY, SPIDER-MAN. THERE'S GONNA BE A LOT OF PEOPLE WANTING T' THANK YOU FOR NOT LETTING THIS TECHNOLOGY GET INTO THE WRONG HANDS. YOU WANT ME TO PUT IN A WORD?

NAH... DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT -- THEY'LL PROBABLY BE MIFFED THAT I BROKE THEIR SHINY NEW TOY.

AN' SPEAKING OF WHICH, I GUESS THIS MEANS YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO TRACK A GUY BY HIS RADIATION SIGNATURE ANYMORE, *HUH?*

I GUESS *NOT.*

THE END

MARVEL

PSR 21

JENKINS
CALDWELL
CAMPANELLA

THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN®

At a demonstration on Radiation, high school student Peter Parker was bitten by an Irradiated Spider from which he gained the Arachnid's Incredible Abilities. When a burglar killed his beloved Uncle Ben, a grief-stricken Peter vowed to use his Great Powers in the service of his fellow man, because he learned an invaluable lesson: With Great Power there must also come Great Responsibility.

THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN

"READ 'EM AN' WEEP"

PREVIOUSLY

Peter Parker--the Spectacular Spider-Man--has just recovered from a dramatic transformation at the hands of Ana Soria, a.k.a. the Queen. Ana's remarkable mutation, enhanced by U.S. military experiments, allowed her to change Peter into an actual spider!

Ana's plan backfired, releasing Peter from his arachnid form--but something has changed. His senses are enhanced, his body more muscular, and he can now shoot organic webbing from his wrists! These new powers imply untold possibilities for his identity as Spider-Man.

But will they help him in a game of poker?

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FRIDAY, 8:07 PM. THE END OF ANOTHER WORKING WEEK.

THIS IS WHERE THE FUN BEGINS.

ESTABLISHMENT

EVERYONE'S EITHER HOME OR HEADED THAT WAY. BIG GAME ON TV THIS WEEKEND BETWEEN NEW YORK AND PHILLY.

RESTAURANTS ARE GETTING READY FOR A LONG NIGHT. LOOKS LIKE IT MIGHT RAIN BEFORE MORNING.

YOU'D THINK IT WAS JUST ANOTHER ORDINARY NIGHT IN THE CITY.

AND YOU'D BE WRONG.

...THREE CLUBS SHOWING-- POSSIBLE FLUSH... NO HELP TO THE QUEEN...

...JUST TURN THE CARD ALREADY, MONEYMAKER...

...SO, I LOOK OVER AT THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING AN' HE'S TORN OFF HALF THE BRICKS WITH HIS BARE HANDS...

...WHAT DID YOU DO...?

...JACK OF HEARTS... NO HELP THERE...

...I DUNNO-- I JUST KINDA *STOOD* THERE. BY THE TIME HE FINISHED HE WAS TOO CRAPPED OUT TO PUT UP A FIGHT...

HI, AM I LATE?

IT'S OKAY, ANGEL--THEY STARTED A FEW HANDS AGO. WE'VE SAVED YOU A CHAIR. YOU'RE THE LAST ONE.

HELLO, PROFESSOR RICHARDS. XAVIER SENDS HIS REGARDS--

ACE HIGH! WITH A *QUEEN!*

STRANGE, DUDE...YOU *LOST*. FOR THE TWELFTH TIME, THREE OF A KIND BEATS ACE HIGH. HECK, *ANYTHING* BEATS ACE HIGH EXCEPT *KING* HIGH.

I THOUGHT THAT WAS A LOW STRAIGHT. I'M SURE ON ESPN THEY SAID THAT WAS A LOW STRAIGHT.

PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU, DOC. I'M CURIOUS: DIDN'T YOU EVER PLAY POKER IN MEDICAL SCHOOL?

MAYBE WE SHOULD PLAY WITH *TAROT* CARDS.

LET'S HAVE A LITTLE UNDERSTANDING, PLEASE, GANG. STEPHEN IS STILL A NOVICE AT THIS GAME, AFTER ALL.

OKAY, FOLKS...SMALL BLINDS ARE IN. BIG BLIND GOES TO ANGEL. LET'S KEEP THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD.

DUDE, HE WATCHES ESPN. YOU THINK HE PRACTICES IN FRONT OF A *MIRROR?*

HEHH...

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE FOLDED IN THAT LAST HAND, JOHNNY, DARLING--YOU OBVIOUSLY HAD THREE JACKS OR HIGHER.

YOU'LL FIND IT HARD TO BEAT ME TONIGHT WITH YOUR CARDS WRITTEN ALL OVER YOUR ***EYES.***

HERE YA GO, PUSSYCAT--TRY READING MY EYES NOW.

SETTLE DOWN, BEAVIS.

Every year, a few of us heroes get together for a friendly game of poker, with proceeds going to the charity of the winner's choice. It's *No Limit Texas Hold 'Em*--if by *"no limit"* you mean twenty bucks each.

The Black Cat is a special invitee--she plays like a typical sneak thief...waits for an opportunity and moves in for the kill when she thinks no one is looking.

Too confident; bluffs too much. Loves the action more than the result.

My old buddy the Human Torch plays it like he lives it; the problem is he only takes it seriously if he thinks it's ***IMPORTANT.***

Thing plays like a bulldozer. An effective bulldozer, but still a ***BULLDOZER.***

Angel plays a pretty mean game--he has the right kind of poker face, always has.

Although he's finding it's not easy to concentrate once Felicia appears on your radar.

Doctor Strange, unfortunately, has all the card skills of a ***BRICK.***

You'd expect a man with a doctorate in Weirdology to be able to unlock the mysteries of Texas Hold 'Em in a heartbeat, but it's unlikely he could unlock the mysteries of Old Maid.

And me, well...the mask helps. That, and a good helping of spider-sense, which comes in handy when I'm being ***BLUFFED.***

Speaking of which, it's been acting up for the last minute or two...

KNOCK KNOCK

I WONDER WHO THAT COULD BE. DID ANYONE ORDER ROOM SERVICE?

NOT ME, SIS--I'M STUFFED.

THAT'S 'CAUSE YOU ATE ALL OF MY ***SHRIMP!***

MAYBE WE'RE MISSING A PLAYER--

GOOD EVENING.

READ 'EM AN' WEEP

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KINGPIN! WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I'M RELYING ON YOUR SENSE OF FAIR PLAY, MY DEAR TORCH. ALL I ASK IS A MINUTE OF YOUR TIME. IF YOU DON'T LIKE WHAT I HAVE TO SAY, I TRUST YOU WILL ACT FAIRLY AND ALLOW ME TO GO ON MY WAY.

NEVERTHELESS, I AM HERE. AND I HAVE A *PROPOSAL* TO MAKE TO YOU ALL.

BELIEVE ME, I HAD A DEVIL OF A TIME BRIBING PEOPLE TO FIND OUT THE LOCATION OF YOUR LITTLE ANNUAL POKER GAME.

FRANKLY, I DON'T MUCH LIKE ANY ONE OF YOU, AND THE THOUGHT OF BEING HERE MAKES ME SICK TO MY STOMACH: AS IF YOUR PALTRY TWENTY-DOLLAR STAKES ARE GOING TO MAKE A DENT IN THE COFFERS OF THE UNITED WAY.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IF I SWEETENED THE POT A LITTLE?

SOMEONE TELL ME THIS GUY IS KIDDING.

I NEVER KID, SPIDER-MAN. YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT BY NOW. BUT I TAKE IT I HAVE PIQUED YOUR INTEREST.

I PROPOSE RAISING THE STAKES A LITTLE. I'M WILLING TO DISTRIBUTE FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS TO EACH PLAYER HERE, AND WE'LL PLAY A REAL GAME OF NO LIMIT, WINNER-TAKE-ALL.

IF ANY OF YOU WIN, YOU CAN GIVE THE CASH TO WHICHEVER GROTTY LITTLE CHARITY YOU'VE CHOSEN.

AN' WHAT IF *YOU* WIN?

I'LL USE THE MONEY TO BUY A BOAT, WHICH I SHALL NAME THE "*HEROES' FOLLY*." AND I WILL USE YOUR RESPECTIVE TWENTY-DOLLAR STAKES TO BUY MYSELF A NICE CUBAN CIGAR, WHICH I SHALL OBTAIN *ILLEGALLY*.

WHY GO TO SO MUCH TROUBLE ON OUR ACCOUNT, FISK?

BECAUSE I INTEND TO *WIN*, MY DEAR DOCTOR RICHARDS. I INTEND TO GIVE YOU ALL A CHANCE TO TAKE MY MONEY, AT WHICH POINT YOU'LL HAVE TO WATCH HELPLESSLY AS I TAN YOUR *HIDES*.

HA! *HEHH*...IN FACT, IT WILL BE THE MOST ENJOYABLE PROFIT I'LL EVER MAKE.

HE'S ON THE LEVEL, PROF-- MY SPIDER-SENSE ISN'T GOING OFF, SO I'M GUESSING HE MEANS WHAT HE *SAYS*.

YES, BUT CAN WE TRUST HIM IF HE LOSES?

I DUNNO. I JUST KNOW I'D LIKE TO *STUFF* IT TO HIM ONCE AN' FOR ALL.

C'MON, REED...WHAT SAY WE WIPE THAT SMUG LOOK OFF HIS FAT FACE?

I'D LIKE TO KNOW IF ANYONE HAS AN OBJECTION TO MISTER FISK'S PROPOSAL.

EITHER WE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS GENEROUS OFFER OR WE LET HIM WALK AWAY. *ANYONE?*

WELL THEN... WELCOME TO THE GAME, MISTER FISK.

All of which brings us here, to the unlikeliest poker game of all time: five heroes, two thieves, three hundred-odd grand...

...and an ATTITUDE problem.

AHEM...I'M AFRAID THIS IS A NON-SMOKING ROOM, MISTER FISK. BESIDES, YOU'D BE AMAZED AT WHAT THOSE THINGS DO TO YOUR LUNGS ON A MOLECULAR LEVEL.

NO SMOKING

MMF. VERY CIVIC-MINDED OF YOU, STRANGE. HOWEVER, SOME OF US PREFER TO TAKE OUR CHANCES RATHER THAN HAVE OUR BODIES DICTATED TO BY GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS OR HOTEL MANAGEMENT.

MMF. WHY WON'T THIS THING LIGHT?

MUST BE DAMP IN HERE.

I BELIEVE ON TV THEY SAY, "I'M ALL IN."

Moments later...

DUDE, YOU WENT ALL IN ON TWO THREES. YOU CAN'T BLUFF THE MONEY LEADER ON A PAIR OF THREES--

YOU CAN IF YOU'RE *DEMENTED.*

WAIT! I WANT TO BUY BACK IN.

OKAY, LADIES AND GENTS-- WE HAVE OUR FIRST CASUALTY OF THE EVENING. THANKS FOR PLAYING, STEPHEN.

THAT AIN'T REAL MONEY--YOU MADE THAT UP!

OF *COURSE* IT'S REAL MONEY. I WITHDREW IT FROM MY BANK ACCOUNT.

HE WATCHES ESPN *AND* HE HAS A BANK ACCOUNT?

FRIDAY, 9:54 PM...THINGS GET WORSE FOR THE MASTER OF THE ARCANE...

WELL, THIS CONTROVERSIAL YOUNG DOCTOR FROM BROOKLYN--NICKNAMED "*THE HUMAN ATM*"--HAS BOUGHT BACK IN ***TWICE***, LARRY. HE'S EXHIBITING A ***SPECTACULAR*** INEPTITUDE FOR THIS GAME.

INTERESTING STRATEGY THERE IN THAT LAST HAND, BOB: FOLDING ON A FULL HOUSE TO LULL THE OTHER PLAYERS INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY.

AN' MIGHT I ADD FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL NEW PLAYERS THAT THE FIRST THREE CARDS REVEALED IN TEXAS HOLD 'EM POKER ARE TRADITIONALLY KNOWN AS "*THE FLOP*", AND NOT "*NUMBER THREE.*"

NO YOU MAY NOT.

IT NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE ME THAT TWO CHILDREN SUCH AS YOURSELVES MANAGE TO SURVIVE IN A MAN'S WORLD. IT'S A WONDER YOU CAN PUT YOUR SPANDEX SUITS ON CORRECTLY EVERY MORNING.

I ***LIKE*** BEING A KID--IT'S WHAT KEEPS ME YOUNG AND INTERESTING. YOU'D BE AMAZED AT THE STUFF I SEE.

HEHH... OKAY, WHAT'S THE CRAZIEST THING YOU'VE SEEN OVERALL?

A CLASS CLOWN DRESSED IN A SPIDER SUIT.

THE MAFIA.

TOUCHÉ.

THE MORTAL MIND CAN HARDLY CONCEIVE OF THE *TRULY* BIZARRE. NOT AS *I* CAN.

I DUNNO, DOC...I SEEN SOME PRETTY NUTTY STUFF.

HAVE YOU EVER OBSERVED THE MATING HABITS OF A FOUR-DIMENSIONAL HYPER-FUNGUS?

OH, THAT HAPPENED TO *ME* ONCE. I DATED A *TRILL*. PROBLEM IS THEY'RE DIVIDED BY EIGHTEEN SPECIFIC GENDERS.

THINGS GOT KINDA *AWKWARD*.

EIGHTS OVER FOURS! READ 'EM AND WEEP, BOYS!

WHAT ABOUT YOU, SPIDER-MAN? WHAT'S THE CRAZIEST THING YOU EVER ENCOUNTERED?

I DUNNO... I KEEP RUNNING INTO THIS GANG OF *MIMES*. THERE WAS ANOTHER GUY WHO USED TO DRIVE AROUND CRUSHING THINGS INSIDE THIS GREAT BIG WHEEL. HE CALLED HIMSELF "THE BIG WHEEL."

HEY, I MET THAT GUY DOWN AT THE RUSTY NAIL. HE'S WORKING AS A SECURITY GUARD NOW. DID YOU KNOW HIS REAL FIRST NAME IS *AXEL?*

WAIT... I GOT IT: THE *MARAUDERS!*

"SO I'M COMING OVER THE BACK ALLEYWAYS BEHIND THE TROPHY CLUB ONE NIGHT--"

"I'VE BEEN THERE. THEY MAKE GREAT CHICKEN WINGS."

"YEAH. SO ANYWAY... I MAKE A TURN AT THE BACK OF THE NATIONAL INSTRUMENTS WAREHOUSE--"

"MY BUDDY PHIL WORKS THERE!"

DUDE, WHO'S TELLING THIS STORY?

SORRY.

AS I WAS SAYING, I MAKE A TURN AT THE BACK OF THE WAREHOUSES WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN I HEAR THIS NOISE...

WE ARE ANGRY THUGS! GIVE US ALL YOUR MONEY!

OH, NO! WHO WILL SAVE US *NOW?*

TALLY HO! DON'T WORRY, FOLKS... I GOT YOU COVERED!

IT'S SPIDER-MAN!

FRED

"NOW, I'VE ROUGHED UP A FEW OUT-OF-SHAPE GOONS IN MY TIME, BUT IT WAS NEVER THIS EASY. I MEAN, THESE GUYS WERE LITERALLY WALKING INTO PUNCHES.

"IT'S ONLY AS I GET IN THE LAST BLOW THAT I REALIZE THEIR GUNS ARE MADE OUT OF *WOOD.*"

THAT WAS AWESOME! NOW HIT *ME!*

UH, EXCUSE ME--?

C'MON, MAN...JUST A LITTLE WHACK UPSIDE THE HEAD, OR SOMETHIN'--

SHUT UP, YOU IDIOT. YOU AIN'T SUPPOSED TO *ASK* HIM.

FRED

I'M CONFUSED--

JUST A *SHOVE,* THEN. RIGHT HERE IN THE CHEST.

NO. THAT'S WEIRD.

OH, HEY...CHECK IT OUT: THIS IS WHERE CAPTAIN AMERICA CAUGHT ME WITH HIS SHIELD.

FRED

DAREDEVIL ALMOST NEARLY SAT ON ME ONCE. HE GOT REAL CLOSE.

IT TURNS OUT THEY WERE FROM A CLUB CALLED THE MASOCHIST MARAUDERS WHOSE MAIN PURPOSE IN LIFE IS TO BE BEATEN UP BY *SUPER HEROES.*

ONE OF THEM OFFERED ME A FREE MEMBERSHIP.

HAHAHAHA!

SUNDAY, 12:45 AM...ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE.

Just me, Fisk and the Thing now: Thing's on the short stack and Fisk is laying down the hammer--

I'M ALL IN.

LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT.

SO ANYWAY, WONG, STOP ME IF YOU KNOW THIS ONE...

...ISSA REALLY NEAT TRICK...

THREE SEVENS--

I *KNEW* IT! I HAVE A FLUSH! YOU LOSE!

And suddenly, it's just me and *HIM*.

I MUST SAY I'M SURPRISED AT YOUR GOOD FORTUNE, SPIDER-MAN. IT'S A SHAME IT WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO THE OUTCOME.

YOU THINK YOU CAN HIDE AS USUAL BEHIND THAT MASK. BUT I DON'T NEED TO SEE YOUR FACE--I CAN TELL EXACTLY WHAT YOU'RE HOLDING BY YOUR BODY LANGUAGE.

GOOD FOR YOU. I'LL RAISE YOU FIVE HUNDRED.

IS THAT A BLUFF I SEE BEFORE ME?

OKAY...BOTH PLAYERS ARE IN. TWO NINES SHOWING... POSSIBLE THREE OF A KIND OR FULL HOUSE.

THE BET IS TO MISTER FISK.

YOU HAVE TWO PAIRS. THE QUESTION IS, DO YOU HAVE ANY HIGHER THAN A ***QUEEN***, SPIDER-MAN?

AND THIS IS THE PART OF THIS MAGNIFICENT GAME THAT I LOVE: THE PART WHERE WE BRING YOUR STRENGTH OF CHARACTER INTO QUESTION.

IT'S A QUESTION OF PUSH COMING TO SHOVE. AND WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, YOU HAVE ONLY TWO PAIRS AND NEITHER THE PATIENCE NOR THE RESOLVE TO BLUFF ME.

WHICH LEADS ME TO STATE THE OBVIOUS: I'M ALL *IN*.

GO AHEAD. LET'S SEE IF YOU HAVE THE *NERVE.*

WOW. THAT'S EVERYTHING HE HAS.

GO FOR IT.

I GOT TWO PAIRS--

FULL HOUSE: QUEENS OVER *NINES!*

I KNEW YOU DIDN'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES. YOU LOSE!

THAT BLOWS.

THANK YOU, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. I'LL GIVE YOUR LOVE TO MY CIGAR SALESMAN--

AHEM. LIKE I WAS SAYING, I GOT TWO PAIRS.

TWO NINES...

...AN' TWO *MORE* NINES. THAT MAKES *FOUR.*

READ 'EM AN' *WEEP,* FATSO.

WAIT... WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "*FOUR NINES*"?

YOU CAN'T HAVE--

YOINK!

MISTER FISK?

LEAVE ME ALONE IF YOU WANT TO LIVE.

WHO *WON?*

HERE YOU GO, WARREN-- YOU CAN REACH ME ON MY CELL ANYTIME DURING THE DAY.

WHAT ABOUT AT NIGHT?

MEOW.

HAW! HEHH...DUDE, THAT WAS *AWESOME!* DID YOU SEE THE LOOK ON HIS FACE?

THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY... THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY...

YO, PROF! CAN YOU GET THIS MONEY TO THE CEREBRAL PALSY RESEARCH FOUNDATION FOR ME? THEY'RE IN KANSAS.

NO PROBLEM AT ALL. THAT WAS A GREAT WIN, SPIDER-MAN. I'M SURE MISTER FISK DIDN'T THINK SO, MIND YOU.

IT WASN'T ABOUT THE MONEY. HE JUST WANTED TO STUFF IT TO A COUPLE OF SUPER HEROES 'CAUSE HE'S TIRED OF GETTING STUFFED HIMSELF.

HERE...LET ME JUST TAKE TWENTY FOR CAB FARE.

GOD, I LOVE BEING A HERO.

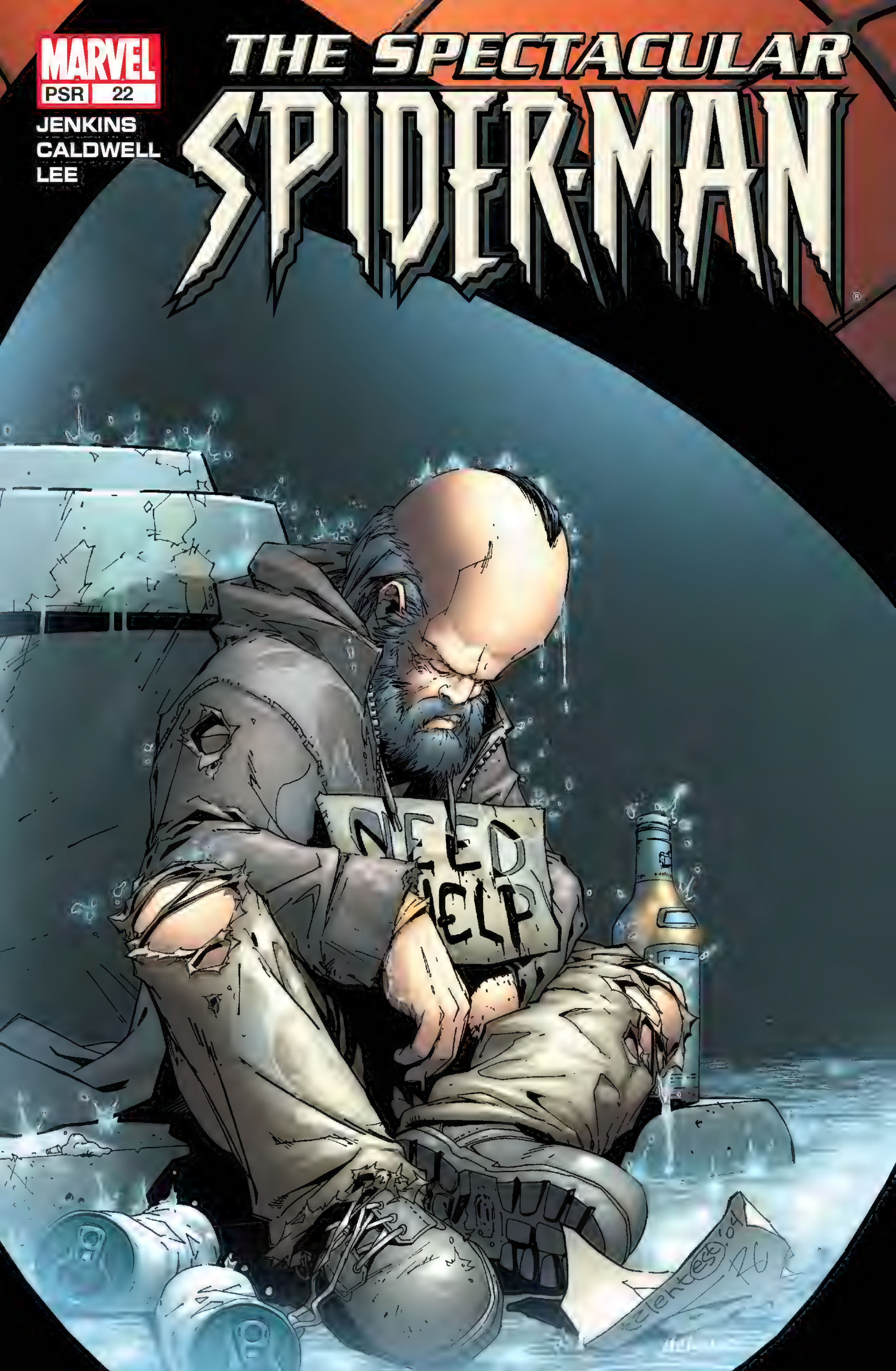
TO: MJ
TO: M.J.
HAHAHAHAHA!

HAHAHAHAHA!!

MARVEL
PSR 22

JENKINS
CALDWELL
LEE

THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN



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THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN

"THE INFERNAL TRIANGLE"

PREVIOUSLY

Peter Parker--the Spectacular Spider—Man--has just recovered from a dramatic transformation at the hands of Ana Soria, a.k.a. the Queen. Ana's remarkable mutation, enhanced by U.S. military experiments, allowed her to change Peter into an actual spider!

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There's nothing permanent except *CHANGE.*

You go uphill, you go downhill; you *EVOLVE.*

Because change is the way of the world, and anyone who says different is just afraid of what it *MEANS.*

Your first day alive... your first day of school...your first and your *HUNDRED* and first day of work. Everything changes.

You change careers; you change your mind about life, love and your favorite football player. You change your *MIND* and you change your *VOTE.*

You change into a freakin' *SPIDER.*

HERE YOU GO, LITTLE BUDDY... DON'T DO ANYTHING *I* WOULDN'T DO.

LIKE MUTATE INTO A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT ***SPECIES.***

From up here, the people below always seem like ***ANTS:*** there's a method to what they're doing and where they're ***GOING***...but only ***THEY*** know for sure.

You can only find out their intent by going down below.

And then they don't seem like ants anymore.

Probably no one can see it as I do, but something is vastly different in this particular section of the anthill. Something about this particular city block...

A kid clatters his board down the sidewalk, looking for someone to run into. A minor fender bender turns into a major scuffle.

With my spider-sense multiplied, the place seems like a huge cavern, painted with some kind of psychic sponge.

But it's dark, and all the colors are wrong.

A girl cries...jilted by a boy she never liked anyway. Two lovers argue but they have no idea *WHY*.

This city block has become a wasteland--it's a pocket of human misery.

And the source is somewhere down there.

I move in, attempting to triangulate... hairs stand up on the back of my neck. The origin of all this misery is somewhere under the bridge.

Spider-sense clatters as a train passes overhead. This is all messed up.

JAVA CO.

Right *THERE*. Nobody knows it...but *I* do. This poor wretch is the reason for all of the misery in the neighborhood.

Lost in a morass of apathetic passers-by, he can't see the infernal triangle he's created for himself.

Homeless guy...empty plate... bottle of booze. No one's going to give him any money 'cause he'll just spend it on more booze. He's too far gone to understand.

An' suddenly, I realize there's more to this story--a *LOT* more.

I *KNOW* this guy.

THE INFERNAL TRIANGLE

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I KNOW this guy. But he's CHANGED.

Uphill. Downhill.

On the tracks and off again.

His story unfolds in my mind: how did he get here? What happened to him? Where has he been?

How am I responsible?

He used to BE someone. But now he's just another drunk, drifting in and out of the world and taking everyone along for the ride.

Psychically projecting his misery onto everyone and everything for an entire city block.

I don't remember his real name. His villain name was *MINDWORM.*

I ran into him a couple of times over the years. He was kind of a lightweight.

Had the power to alter people's perception-- used it to make a little cash on the side.

Couple of jewel heists; small potatoes.

Interesting technique.

I remember he looked so tired the last time we carted him off to jail. I got the sense he never had the heart for crime in the first place.

POL

They held him at Ravencroft for a while. I talked to his parole officer about a month after he went down.

He was a model prisoner. The medication helped him a lot. They let him out to minimum security after only a year or so.

A lot can change in a year. ***EVERY-THING*** changes.

I guess I never really wondered what happened to him.

And now ***I KNOW.***

...####...M'GISS... COUPLA BUCKS... ###...SUMTH'N T'EAT..?

I'm the Spider-Man, with all the power in the world, and it's still not enough to affect the outcome.

What do I *DO*? Who do I *PUNCH* to fix the problem?

All I can give is my sympathy and my umbrella.

And neither of those is *ENOUGH.*

...AND SO I TOLD HER IF SHE WAS GOING TO CHARGE ME THAT MUCH FOR A HAIRCUT, SHE'D HAVE TO COLOR IT, TOO.

DO YOU THINK I WAS BEING TOO *HARSH*, PETER?

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE *FOOD*--

HMM? OH, JEEZ...SORRY, AUNT MAY. I GUESS I ZONED OUT FOR A MOMENT THERE.

MM-HMM... AND THIS WOULD BE A *SUPER HERO* RELATED PROBLEM, WOULD IT?

YOU KNOW, IT'S RATHER UNFAIR OF YOU WHENEVER YOU INDEPENDENTLY DECIDE TO PROTECT MARY JANE AND ME FROM YOUR OTHER LIFE.

YOU HAVE TWO WOMEN WHO *DOTE* ON YOU, DEAR. WHATEVER THE CRISIS, I'M SURE WE CAN MANAGE IT.

LET'S SAY TWO PEOPLE ARE DROWNING AND YOU CAN ONLY SAVE ONE OF THEM.

WHICH ONE DO YOU *SAVE?*

IS THIS A CONUNDRUM, TIGER?

NOPE. A REAL-LIFE PROBLEM.

AN EX-CON I KNOW. CLEANED UP HIS ACT FOR A WHILE BUT HE'S FALLEN ON HARD TIMES. I THINK HE'S LOST HIS *MIND*.

I FOUND HIM OUT ON THE STREETS YESTERDAY, WASHING HIS PROBLEMS AWAY WITH A BOTTLE OF CHEAP BLENDED SCOTCH.

YOU CAN'T SAVE EVERYBODY, BABE.

THAT'S MY POINT: WHAT IF I CHOOSE TO *HELP* THIS GUY? WHY *HIM* AND NOT ANY ONE OF FIFTY OTHER HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE SAME ALLEY?

YOU'RE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF, SWEETHEART. YOU SAVE A GUY IN BROOKLYN, YOU WEREN'T THERE TO SAVE SOMEONE IN THE BRONX.

IT HAPPENS. IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.

IT'S NOT FAIR, AUNT MAY.

YOU'RE A HERO, PETER: YOU'RE SPIDER-MAN, NOT *GOD*.

DON'T YOU PEOPLE EVER CONSIDER WRITING TO YOUR CONGRESS-MAN?

Next couple of days, I get to thinking about the big picture of what's happened here.

That's always dangerous for a guy with a history like mine.

I think about Mindworm's plight, trying to remember the mistakes I must have made.

How many times did I *LAUGH* at the guy when I was taking him apart?

How many nights did I go home and complain about my life to my beautiful girl while he sat in a puddle of his own puke and wondered where his next drink was coming from?

When did he first realize he was losing his mind? How many people did he try, in his own way, to tell?

Does he have a family?

Do any of them *CARE?*

Ironic, isn't it, how he finally got inside my mind.

I get to realizing this one, solitary ex-con is the mirror held up to everything I do and everything I *AM*.

A man is measured by the smallest margins, not by the great deeds but by the little things.

It's not the Green Goblins or the Electros that define me, but what I did for a guy like Mindworm.

Mary Jane will always tell me, "You're too hard on yourself. Don't beat yourself up."

Easy to say...but truth be told, I treat this great power of mine like a *TOY*. I'm never hard enough.

He probably was *ALWAYS* mentally ill.

And I treated him like a *CRIMINAL*.

A week passes. One thing leads to another, and I "accidentally on purpose" pass by Mindworm's neck of the woods with some half-baked plan to take him to a doctor I know.

Unsure if I'm here for him...

...or for ME.

SOMETHING'S WRONG.

Still alive... they *ALL* are.

Their pulses are slow but steady. I've seen this before.

It can be caused by a massive surge of neural energy, usually expended by anyone who comes under prolonged psychic attack.

I've waited just a moment too long.

...THOUGHT WE TOLD YOU FREAKS TO STAY AWAY FROM HERE. DIDN'T I SAY THAT, FREAK?

CHICKEN SCRATCH AIN'T LISTENIN', JERRY. *MAKE* 'IM LISTEN.

OH, BUDDHA...

...DON'T DO THAT!

KRASH!

AAAIGGH!!

OHH... LORD, NO!

MINDWORM! TURN IT *OFF!*

UHFF!

NO! GETTAWAY FROM ME! GETTAWAY!

NEEEE

NUHHHH

Mindworm's nightmare visions are distilled, concentrated.

Like hard liquor.

Vapors of the heart and soul.

Guaranteed to dull your senses and wipe your mind clean.

SHAKE IT OFF, WEBS...IT'S NOT REAL...

Not real--it can't be.

I try to tell myself that, but I can't be sure.

NOBODY can say what's real.

BAM

NNAHH! I HATE YOU, POPPA!

I *HATE* YOU!

BAM

BAM

MINDWORM... LISTEN TO ME: YOU GOTTA TRY TO CALM DOWN! THIS ISN'T REAL! IT'S IN YOUR MIND!

STAY AWAY, PIG!

YOU KNOW WHAT YOU *DID* TO ME, POPPA.

YOU *KNOW* WHAT YOU DID!

SLASSH!

AA-*AHH!*

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE, BENNY!

THWIP

We wait too long.

We always do.

-AA-UHH-

KRAK

And after we've waited it's always too *LATE*.

YEAH... THAT'S IT, BENNY! YOU JUST KEEP GOING!

BUT DON'T TRY TO *SLEEP* THIS WEEK, 'CAUSE I KNOW WHERE YOU *LIVE*, YOU LITTLE PIECE OF DIRT!

Too long.

Too little. Too late.

I'm like the *CLEANING* lady for this city.

YOU OKAY, PAL?

MINDWORM?

Yeah...that's me: I'm the cleaning lady.

Always got some kind of *SOLUTION.*

But it never really gets out the *STAIN.*

END.

MARVEL
PSR 27

THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN®

JENKINS
BUCKINGHAM
D'ISRAELI

THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN

After his parents died in a plane crash, young Peter Parker went to live with his beloved Aunt May and Uncle Ben. Though he often suffered the ridicule of his classmates, Peter displayed a strong aptitude for learning, especially in the sciences. At a demonstration on radiation, Peter, then a high school student, was bitten by an irradiated spider, from which he gained the arachnid's incredible abilities.

Tragedy struck the Parker family when Ben was killed by a burglar. A grief-stricken Peter, realizing that he could have prevented his uncle's death, vowed always to use his powers in the service of his fellow man.

Though he still mourns the death of his first love, Gwen Stacy, Peter is now married to the beautiful Mary Jane Watson. He lives every day remembering the words of his Uncle Ben: "with great power, there must also come great responsibility." Peter Parker is the spectacular Spider-Man, one of New York City's greatest heroes!

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"UNCA BEN! UNCA BEN!"

"GOTCHA!"

"REDDY OR NOT! HA HA HA!"

BEDDER WATCH OUT, UNCA BEN! I'M CUMMIN' TA *GETCHA!*

AVAST, YE SCURVY PIRATES! ALL HANDS ON DECK!

NO, WAIT! OWWWW!

SPLITCH

HA HA... *HEHH*...OH, DEAR! YOU OUGHT TO SEE THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE! WHAT A PICTURE!

HEY! LOOK UP THERE! *BEHIN'* YOU!

WHAT? WHERE? I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING. IS IT DANGEROUS?

KEEP LOOKIN'.

HRAHH!

SPLITCH

BEN PARKER

HE WAS LOVED

HE SHOOTS, HE *SCORES!*

BEN PARKER

HE WAS LOVED

MERRY CHRISTMAS, UNCLE BEN.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, PETER.

SORRY I'M LATE. I GOT TIED UP.

YOU GET TIED UP MORE THAN HARRY HOUDINI. WHAT WAS IT THIS TIME, A GOBLIN OR A VULTURE?

BEN PARKER
HE WAS LOVED

A RHINO.

IS IT ME, OR IS IT *FREEZING* OUT HERE? I SWEAR IT GETS COLDER AND COLDER IN THIS CEMETERY EVERY YEAR.

IT MUST BE GLOBAL WARMING OR SOMETHING. IT NEVER USED TO BE THIS COLD WHEN I WAS A KID--

I'M NOT COLD. WHY DIDN'T YOU WEAR THE GLOVES YOUR AUNT MAY KNITTED FOR YOU?

BECAUSE THEY CUT OFF MY CIRCULATION AT THE ELBOWS. I THINK SHE KNITS THEM OUT OF STEEL WOOL.

ANYWAY, SINCE WHEN DID YOU EVER WEAR A SINGLE ONE OF THE TWENTY MILLION SCARVES SHE KNITTED FOR YOU?

I REFUSE TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT MIGHT GET ME IN TROUBLE WITH THE MAN UPSTAIRS.

HEHH...I KNOW YOUR SECRET. DON'T FORGET: YOU USED TO TAKE ME TO THE SHELTER EVERY YEAR TO DONATE ALL OUR EXTRA CLOTHES.

THEY ASKED US TO STOP COMING BECAUSE ALL THE HOMELESS PEOPLE KEPT BREAKING OUT IN A RASH.

MM. I LOVE THIS TIME OF YEAR, DON'T YOU? CLEAN, CRISP AIR...TURKEY AND STUFFING AND YOUR AUNT MAY'S WHEAT CAKE SOUP. CHRISTMAS DAY WAS ALWAYS MY FAVORITE--

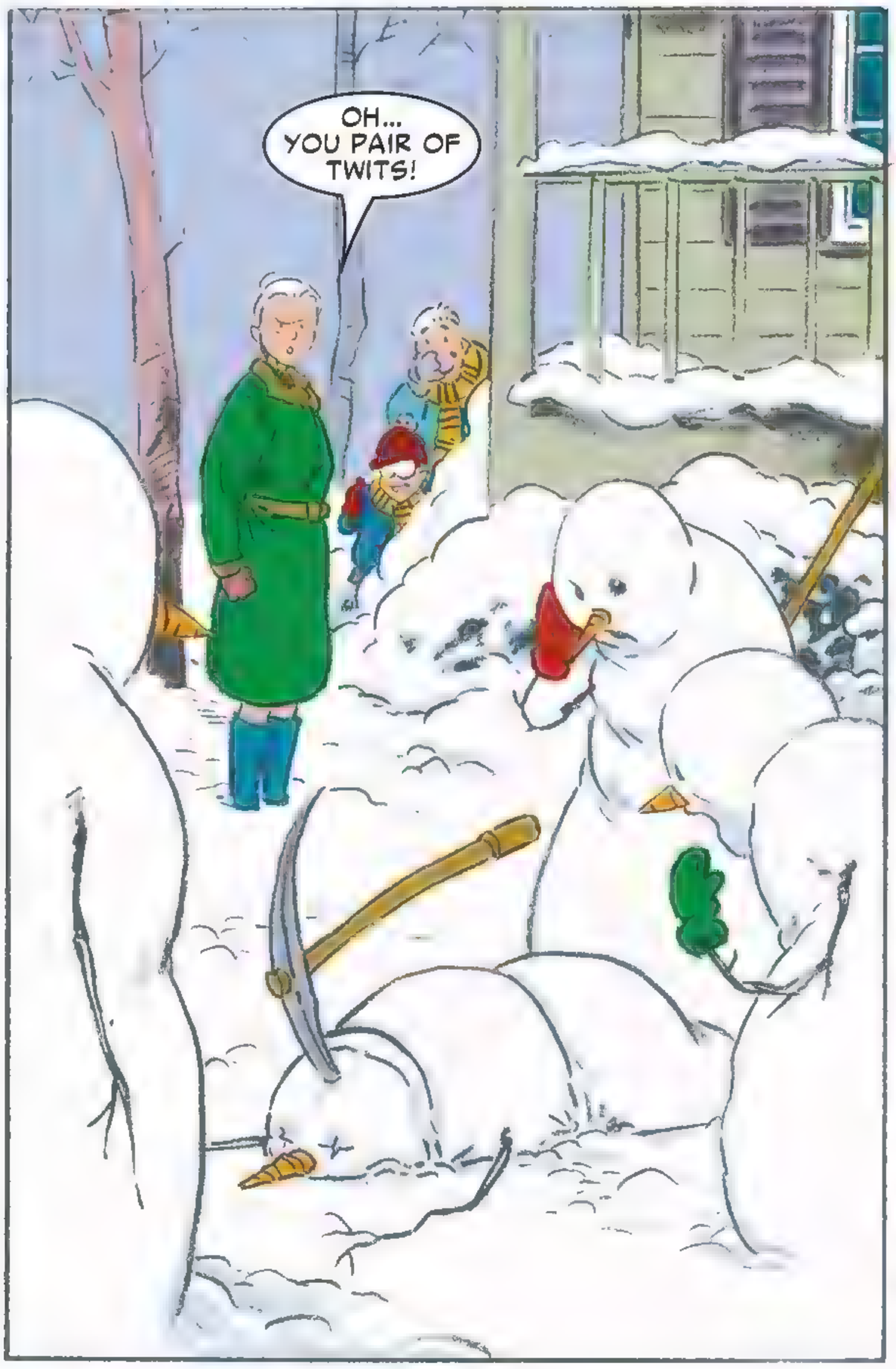
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU USED TO OPEN MY PRESENTS AND PLAY WITH ALL OF MY TOYS.

WELL, YOUR AUNT ONLY EVER GAVE ME SCARVES TO REPLACE THE ONES I LOST THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

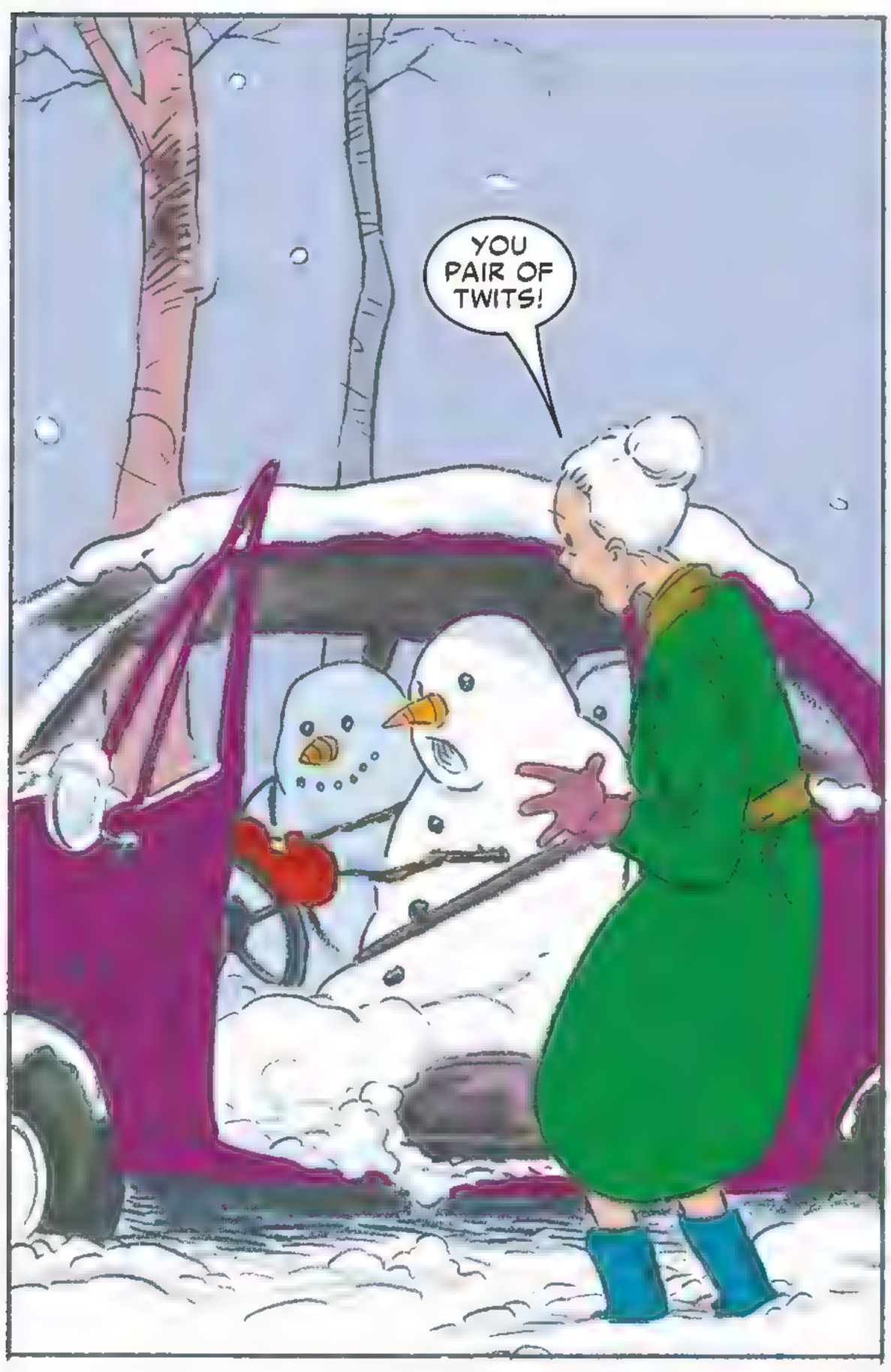
HEHH...DO YOU REMEMBER HOW MUCH SHE HATED OUR ATROCIOUS SNOWMEN?

'COURSE I DO. OUR SNOWMEN WERE LEGENDARY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD. DO YOU REMEMBER SHE'D ALWAYS HAVE THE SAME REACTION, EVERY SINGLE TIME?

YOU PAIR OF TWITS!


OH... YOU PAIR OF TWITS!

YOU PAIR OF TWITS!


YOU PAIR OF TWITS!

YOU PAIR OF TWITS!

THE ONES IN THE CAR-- THOSE WERE MY FAVORITE. SHE THREATENED TO HAVE US BOTH *COMMITTED* THAT YEAR.

I THOUGHT SHE MEANT IT.

I THINK SHE PROBABLY *DID* AT THE TIME. WOULD'VE BEEN A SHAME, THOUGH. WHO WOULD SHE HAVE KNITTED ALL THOSE HORRIBLE SCARVES AND GLOVES FOR?

THE CHINESE ARMY.

YOU KNOW, I *SEE* YOU, PETER-- EVERYTHING THAT YOU DO. FROM WHERE I SIT, IT'S EASY TO TELL WHEN THINGS ARE RIGHT AND WHEN THEY'RE WRONG.

ARE YOU GOING TO TELL ME WHAT'S TROUBLING YOU?

I DUNNO, UNCLE BEN--I MEAN, IT'S NO ONE SINGLE THING. IT'S JUST THE USUAL WEIGHT-OF-THE-WORLD STUFF.

I WANT TO KNOW I'M STILL DOING THE RIGHT THING. I WANT TO KNOW IT'S WORTH IT.

IS THIS ABOUT MARY JANE?

NO...WELL, IT *IS*, I GUESS. BUT IT'S NOT JUST HER. IT'S PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING-- I FEEL LIKE IT'S GETTING OUT OF CONTROL AGAIN.

SO TELLING YOUR AUNT MAY YOU DRESS UP IN A SPIDER COSTUME AND GO AROUND PUNCHING PEOPLE DIDN'T GO DOWN TOO WELL?

LIKE A LEAD BALLOON. BUT SHE'S WARMING UP TO IT. NOW SHE THINKS I'M JUST CRAZY.

I GUESS TELLING HER WAS A PART OF THE SOLUTION AND A PART OF THE PROBLEM. I LEARNED A LOT FROM IT. WE'RE BOTH TOUGHER THAN I GAVE EITHER OF US CREDIT FOR.

THAT YOU BOTH ARE. SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM, PETER?

EVERYTHING'S *CHANGING.*

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO MAKE IT STOP.

"I FINALLY GOT MARY JANE BACK. HOW DO I TELL HER SHE MEANS EVERYTHING TO ME WHEN I CAN'T SHOW IT?

"SHE SPENDS HALF HER DAY COMPETING WITH SPIDER-MAN FOR MY TIME AND THE OTHER HALF WORRYING IF I'LL COME HOME *ALIVE.*

"HOW DO I TELL HER I LOVE HER MORE THAN ANYONE, YET NOT A SINGLE DAY GOES BY THAT I DON'T THINK OF GWEN?

"THAT BEAUTIFUL, BENEVOLENT SMILE GWEN HAD; I NEVER REALLY TOLD *HER,* EITHER.

"I WANT THE WORLD TO BE A BETTER PLACE, AND IT'S NOT. IT'S A *DUMP* FULL OF VERY NASTY PEOPLE.

"AND I'VE GOT TO STEP IN AND SAVE THE DAY EVERY TIME ONE OF THEM HAS A TOOTHACHE OR WANTS TO BLAME SOCIETY FOR THEIR OWN STUPID SET OF PROBLEMS."

I CAN'T ESCAPE IT, UNCLE BEN.

NOT EVEN WHEN I DREAM.

ANYONE EVER TELL YOU YOU WERE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF, KIDDO?

ALL THE TIME. BUT IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE.

"I KEEP HAVING THIS DREAM: I'M WALKING DOWN A CORRIDOR WITH A TERRIBLE PIT IN MY STOMACH--THERE'S SOMEONE BEHIND ME AND SOMEONE UP AHEAD AND I CAN NEVER SEE THEM, BUT THEY CAN SEE ME.

"IT'S THE SAME FEELING I GET WHEN I RUN INTO THE GOBLIN, OR DOC OCK--I GOTTA FACE THE PROBLEM, BUT I'D RATHER BE ANYWHERE ELSE.

"I COME OUT UPON AN OPENING BY SOME CURTAINS...LIKE A STAGE, OR SOMETHING...IT'S *DARK.*

"AND SUDDENLY, THERE ARE THESE TREMENDOUS FLASHES OF LIGHT.

"I CAN'T SEE A THING FOR A MOMENT...AND THEN MY EYESIGHT BEGINS TO RETURN SLOWLY.

"AND THERE THEY ARE-- ALL OF THEM.

"THE REALLY *BAD* ONES."

WHAT'S THE MATTER, PARKER? ARE YOU SCARED?

HE SHOULD BE FOR WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO NEXT.

DON'T TELL HIM. IT'LL SPOIL THE SURPRISE.

"BUT THEY NEVER TELL ME. AND ALL I CAN DO IS SIT THERE AND TAKE IT. IT'S LIKE CUSTER'S LAST STAND, WITH VILLAINS INSTEAD OF APACHES.

"THEY KNOW WHO I AM.

"AND ONE DAY, ONE OF THEM'S GOING TO *KILL* ME."

WHY MUST YOU TORMENT YOURSELF SO, PETER? THIS SPIDER THING YOU DO--

IT'S NOT WHAT I DO. IT'S WHO I *AM.*

IT'S NOT WHO YOU *ARE.* IT'S A CHOICE YOU MAKE EVERY DAY. YOU SHOULD EXAMINE THAT CHOICE INSTEAD OF BLAMING ME--

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.

I'M NOT REALLY HERE, PETER. YOU'RE TALKING TO YOURSELF.

OF *COURSE* YOU DO.

I'M GOING TO TELL YOU WHAT THE DREAM MEANS. FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE, DON'T BE STUBBORN AND JUST LISTEN TO ME--IT'S WHY YOU CAME HERE.

DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST-GRADE PLAY?

HOW COULD I FORGET? "SOLDIER ANTS AND LADYBUGS."

I WAS THIRD ANT.

"YOUR MOTHER AND AUNT MAY STAYED UP UNTIL THREE IN THE MORNING MAKING THAT COSTUME TO YOUR EXACT SPECIFICATIONS. YOU WERE ALWAYS A STICKLER ABOUT THAT SORT OF THING.

"YOU WANTED TO BE THE BEST SOLDIER ANT IN FIRST GRADE. WE TRIED TO EXPLAIN THAT ANTS HAD ONLY SIX LEGS BUT YOU INSISTED ON TWO EXTRA ONES BECAUSE THEN YOU'D BE THE *LEADER.*"

MY SON, THE EIGHT-LEGGED ANT. SHOULD I BE CONCERNED, BEN?

ONLY IF HE WEARS IT TO HIS SENIOR PROM.

I JUST REMEMBERED SOMETHING--

I KNOW YOU DID. THIS IS ONE OF YOUR ONLY MEMORIES OF THEM.

THE FIRST-GRADE PLAY?

TELL ME WHAT YOU REMEMBER.

"I REMEMBER BEING SO EXCITED I COULDN'T THINK OF ANYTHING ELSE FOR A WEEK. I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO BE THE GREATEST ANT IN THE HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL.

"I WAITED ALL MORNING FOR MY BIG MOMENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT. MY PARENTS WERE COMING! I GOT SO WORKED UP I ALMOST PUKED UP MY LUNCH.

"AND SUDDENLY, IT WAS TWO-FIFTEEN AND I WAS WAITING BACK-STAGE IN MY ANT COSTUME. I HAD THE FIRST LINE OF THE PLAY.

"MISS WELLS MADE US FORM A CROCODILE. I STOOD BEHIND BILLY PINDER AND GARY PERRY.

SCRIPT

JANITOR NEWS

JANITOR SPORT

CLEAN SWEEP IN CARETAKER U.S.A. LEAGUE!

OHH... WOULD YOU LOOK AT THEM? AREN'T THEY SO CUTE?

IT'S HIS FIRST TIME--

"AND THEN..."

"AND THEN?"

"THEN THE *CURTAIN* CAME UP."

PETER... IT'S YOUR LINE, SWEETIE.

PETER?

THIS IS HIS LINE. HE'S BEEN PRACTICING ALL WEEK.

I'LL WARM UP THE CAR.

"AND THERE I WAS..."

"AND THERE YOU *WERE*-- SMALL AND ALONE AND AFRAID IN FRONT OF THE WORLD. IN FRONT OF *THEM*.

"FEELING LIKE AN IDIOT. *FAILING*."

YOUR FIRST-GRADE PLAY.

YOU'D LIKE TO THINK YOU BECAME SPIDER-MAN BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED TO ME, BUT WE BOTH KNOW THAT WOULDN'T BE THE WHOLE STORY.

I LET YOU DOWN, UNCLE BEN. I COULD'VE STOPPED THE GUY WHO KILLED YOU.

COULD'VE HAPPENED TO ANYONE. WE BOTH KNOW IT.

YOU WERE ALWAYS GOING TO BE SOMEONE LIKE SPIDER-MAN, WITH OR WITHOUT YOUR POWERS. THAT'S THE WAY YOU WERE HEADED.

IT WAS NEVER FOR ME. NOT REALLY.

IT WAS ALWAYS FOR YOUR *PARENTS*.

BEN PARKER
HE WAS LOVED

IT BREAKS MY HEART THAT YOU DO THIS TO YOURSELF, PETER. YOU THINK YOU FAILED THEM, BUT YOU DIDN'T.

YOU NEVER HAD THE POWER KEEP THEM ALIVE, AND THEY TO NEVER GOT TO SEE YOU FIX YOUR MISTAKE. YOU WONDER IF THEY WERE EVER PROUD OF YOU.

YOU KILL YOURSELF WITH GUILT OVER ME, GWEN, HER FATHER...ALL OF THE PEOPLE IN THIS CITY YOU THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE SAVED. YOU DIE EVERY DAY FOR YOUR MOM AND DAD.

YOU CAN'T FORGIVE YOURSELF FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO FLASH. YOU CAN'T ACCEPT THAT YOU LOVED GWEN AND NOW YOU LOVE MARY JANE.

BUT YOU HAVE TO, PETER... YOU JUST *HAVE* TO.

GO. LIVE. BE WITH THE PEOPLE YOU LOVE.

WE'LL *WAIT.*

STUBBORN, HUH?

STUBBORN. JUST LIKE YOUR MOTHER AND HER SISTER.

I'LL COME BY ON YOUR BIRTHDAY. YOU WANT ANYTHING SPECIAL?

JUST THE COMPANY. MAYBE A PIECE OF CAKE.

GIVE MY LOVE TO MARY JANE.

I ALWAYS DO.

OHH...

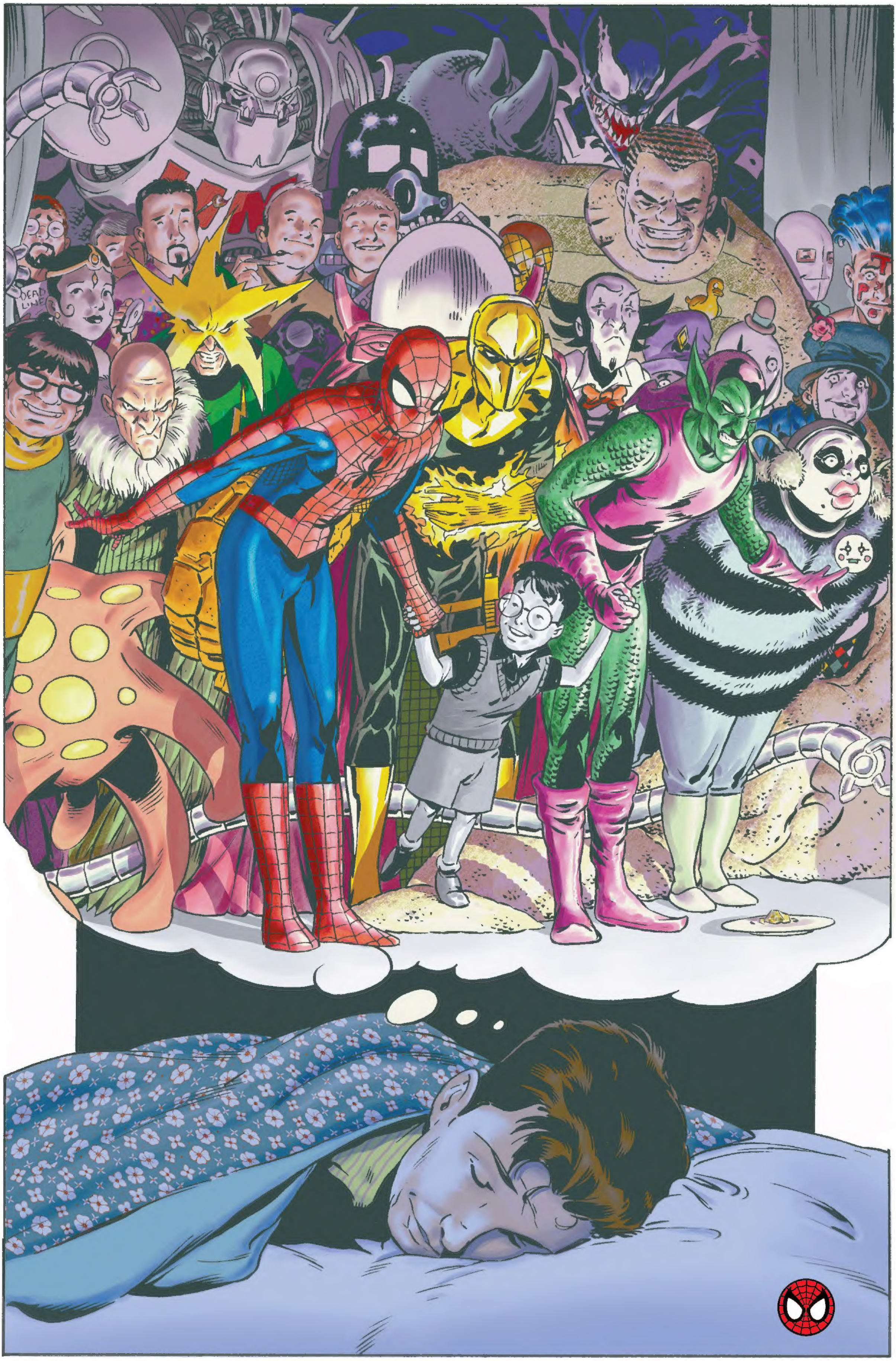
YOU PAIR OF TWITS.

BRAVO! ENCORE! CLAP CLAP

CLAP

GO AHEAD, PETER. THEY'RE CALLING FOR YOU.

BRAVO! CLAP ENCORE! CLAP CLAP CLAP


DEAD LINE

INTO THE SUNSET...

Paul Jenkins wraps up his five-year tenure as a Spider-Man writer and brings *Spectacular Spider-Man* to a close in a moving, self-contained tale that reunites him with artist Mark Buckingham.

Plus, two Spectacular standalone stories! First up: Ben Grimm's all-night poker games have become legendary among the super-hero set, and for the first time Spider-Man has been asked to join the table! Then: Once he was the Mindworm, arch-nemesis of Spider-Man! But now he's a lonely, forlorn beggar, trapped in an infernal triangle of poverty, booze and dementia. Is Spidey responsible for his pitiable condition?

And finally, from the pages of *Peter Parker: Spider-Man,* witness the return of Dr. Octopus in an intense three-part saga!

Collecting *Spectacular Spider-Man #21-22 and #27*, and *Peter Parker: Spider-Man #39-41* – written by Paul Jenkins *(Wolverine: Origin)*, and illustrated by Mark Buckingham *(Fables)* and Talent Caldwell *(Fathom)*.

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